University of Alberta

Contending Middle Kingdoms: The Fate of China - Japan Relations

by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of
my late father, Prof. Gordon Soltice, who
taught me the value of a job well done.

Abstract

China and Japan continue to maintain an antagonistic relationship despite recently becoming each other's top trading partner. This paradox leads to the conclusion that something is at stake. To discover what is at stake in China - Japan relations, Classical Realism is reorganized to include the East Asian political experience. In particular, this essay employs culture as a form of power on its own and as a driving factor of state competition for power and influence. Freud's concept of the narcissism of minor difference, wherein the more two groups have in common the more likely they will be hostile towards each other, leads to the conclusion that China and Japan share a Confucian worldview that relationships with other sinicised states can only be hierarchical and that cultural superiority, as an important marker of power, determines the dynamics of each superior-inferior relationship. The main stake therefore is that China and Japan compete to occupy the superior and rightful position in their bilateral relationship.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my inspiring wife, Kazuko Higashida, for her patience, insight, and unending support during the many stages of this thesis. My supervisor, Dr. Juris Lejnieks, deserves thanks for his guidance and for helping me write with clarity and focus. I wish him the best in his retirement. I appreciate the efforts of my sister, Dr. Alexis Soltice, who always found time to ask how I was doing and to offer advice based on her own experiences in academia. My mother, Norma Soltice, taught me the importance of an education from an early age and was a great source of strength that helped me finish this thesis. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my thesis committee members, Dr. Wenran Jiang and Dr. Jean DeBernardi, my recently arrived son, Kensho, and the many friends who took an active interest in my studies over a very long process.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 2004, China and Japan became each other's top trading partners (Ahn 30 and Watanabe 5). However, the two states continue to share a serious antagonistic relationship that jeopardizes the current level of stability in the East Asian region. For example, despite the great trade relationship shared by China and Japan, and despite decades of extensive Japanese Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to China, Beijing will not allow Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi to make an official visit (Cheow 6). Other examples indicative of a serious antagonistic relationship include frequent skirmishes surrounding the Diaoyu/Senkaku territory dispute, both sides take actions that repeatedly upsets the other,[1] and the maintenance or increase of boastful arms budgets. After 1990, China's military budget increased by about 10 percent every year to support and strengthen the world's largest army in terms of manpower (3 million),[2] and to maintain the world's third largest nuclear arsenal

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[1] Examples include construction of the Unit 731 museum in China, the Chinese submarine excursion into Japanese waters, Yasukuni shrine visits in Japan, and Japan's acceptance of visits from high-ranking Taiwanese officials, among others.
[2] These increases happened even though the main threat identified by China, the USSR, dissolved after 1989 (Chang 7).

(Chang 7). Recent military procurements include, "...air refueling kits from Iran; Su-27 fighter jets,[3] Su-24s, MiG-29s, Hind assault helicopters, and state of the art *Sovremenny*-class missile destroyers with supersonic anti-ship missiles from Russia; and most recently, an aircraft carrier from Ukraine" (Chang 7). Japan, on the other hand, maintains the world's fifth largest military budget in the world, proposed a missile defence budget of US$1.2 billion in 2004 which is nine times more than the total spent from 1999 to 2003 (Matthews 74-5), participates in joint missile defense technology research with the US, recently launched its first ever spy satellites, and is considering revising the defense-only nature of its US-written constitution – all of which China finds very threatening given Japan's imperialistic history. Of note, in light of this data, the region lacks any regional arms control or confidence-building initiatives to try and quell uncertainty over the future use of arms procurements or discuss disagreements.

In China, alongside rising military budgets, there is a noticeable rise in the incidence of both state and popular Chinese nationalist expressions in general (York A11). These expressions range from general responses to the actions of a wide variety of situations and actors, such as after the accidental US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Bosnia, or after a US spy plane crashed on Hainan Island, to

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[3] American F-15 fighter jets are inferior to the Su-27 in some areas (Chang 7).

stronger reactions toward Japan which seem stronger and more frequent (Gries, Japan 18), such as the recent anti-Japan riots in China in April 2005 that ran three weekends in a row before the Chinese government took measures to prevent a reoccurrence, or in one extreme case in 1995 when one Chinese person was willing to die over the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute (Ajello). The most frequent anti-Japanese protests revolve around periodic Japanese Prime Ministerial visits to the controversial Yasukuni shrine where the remains of Japan's war dead and Japanese war criminals are kept, and over the issue of Japanese history textbooks that give scant details about Japan's brutal territorial expansion during the 1930's and 1940's. Even within China, where public demonstrations are illegal, if a mass protest has an anti-Japan theme, such as the three demonstrations in April 2005, the government chooses to ignore the protest, thereby unofficially sanctioning the event (York A11).[4] Even seemingly minor incidents flare into something much bigger, such as when three Japanese exchange students were attacked and later expelled from X'ian's Northwest China University for performing a dance routine wearing t-shirts that read, "Japan loves China" resulting in a protest of over 1000 Chinese students (Pryzstup "Cross"). In 2001, Chinese actress and model, Zhao Wei, unwittingly wore a dress with a Japanese imperial flag

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[4] Such a link between state and popular nationalism is discussed at the end of this chapter.

image while on a fashion runway in New York. For this, Chinese damaged her house and one man assaulted her on New Year's Eve and smeared her with excrement (York A11).

Almost in unison with China's negative attitude toward Japan, Japanese popular approval rating of China is steadily decreasing. A December 18, 2004 poll released by Japan's Cabinet Office found the number of Japanese who have "friendly feelings" toward China has fallen to 37.6%, the lowest since 1978 when the annual poll began (Fackler). In the face of consistent Chinese protests, Japanese leaders are determined to maintain regular visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, accept visits from Taiwanese leaders, and decrease ODA to China in response to a rising "China threat" (People's). In 2001 a popular Japanese newspaper, *Sankei Shimbun*, carried a series of twenty-one articles describing the distorted and one-sided content of history classes in China.[5] These articles further stirred up Japanese resentment of China. The problem of the antagonistic relationship between China and Japan today, despite mutual economic complementarity and a common cultural heritage, leads to the main thesis of this essay, which is to discover what is at stake in China-Japan

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[5] For example, one article notes that Chinese school history textbooks' coverage of the Nanjing massacre rose from 150 lines of text in 1980 to 520 lines in 1992, and that figures for casualties of the Pacific War in a 1991 textbook went up sharply in the 1995 edition of the same textbook (Rozman 119-120).

relations. If there was nothing remarkable at stake, then why do the two not share more amicable relations?

There are many ways to answer this problem, but what determines which approach is accurate? Evidence about the antagonistic relationship above makes Classical Realist theory a reasonable starting point for exploring the problem. Realist-minded authors are attracted to China-Japan relations and the East Asia region in general, in which they see shining examples of Realist principles still at work in a post-Cold War era.[6] Such analysts cite evidence such as large and expanding military budgets, risk of nuclear proliferation, arms races, territorial disputes, hegemonic ambitions, and the absence of Liberal phenomena such as multilateral regional frameworks to handle disputes. Realism's approach to analysing a problem is to look at the capability and intent of the states in question. Capability is relatively easy to identify by looking at military and trade figures, but analysing the intent and interests of a state is a much harder task (Morgenthau 5-8). One method for discovering intent is to find patterns in historical behavior and then try to establish a case that such a pattern will reoccur. Citing recent political rhetoric, which hints at,

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[6] For example, Michael J. Green, Benjamin L. Self, Gerald Segal, Thomas J. Christensen, Aaron Friedberg, and Robert Gilpin, among others.

or reveals, the potential for a repeat of past actions further supports the historical argument for a certain intent.

In the case of China and Japan, a process much the same as the one outlined above can work to ascertain capability and intent. In the past, both states proved more than capable at establishing hegemonic orders in greater East Asia.[7] China's was longer lasting, but Japan's was more aggressive and immediate. These historical patterns of past capability and past intent (of what each state did with their capabilities) of both China and Japan are a starting point here in explaining their antagonistic relationship today. Since the 1980s, both posses the capability to establish hegemonies and act aggressively to support expansionist desires. Looking at China's or Japan's military and economic capabilities alone, both are poised to establish regional hegemonies. Discovering Chinese and Japanese intent, however, is more elusive for many reasons and is the impetus for enquiry here.[8] The principal confounding piece of evidence is that neither has activated their militaries against the other since 1945 despite consistent antagonism and strong state rhetoric between them. This non-action is the first apparent 'hole' in our Realist analysis, which needs to be filled before proceeding with resolving the China-Japan problematic relationship.

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[7] This refers to China's tribute system, and Japan's Greater East Asian co-prosperity sphere, as will be discussed in Chapter two.

[8] The question of China's intent is more critical at the moment given its rapidly growing economy, large military budget, large population, and irredentist claims.

Classical Realist theory expects states such as China and Japan to behave in certain ways. However, these two states in particular foil Realism in three key instances in addition to the above noted non-use of formidable military capabilities. For example, Realist theory expects states to use certain techniques, such as forming alliances, to maintain the balance of power (Morgenthau 175-90). Japan shares a security alliance with the US, which poses a formidable military and economic presence on China's eastern front, and yet China does not try to balance this presence by allying with any other states.[9] It is also a contradiction that Japan, as the economically and militarily stronger of the two at the moment, does not more forcefully press its territorial disputes with China before the eventual "rise" of China and expansion of China's blue water naval forces. Also, why does Japan give aid (ODA) to a state it has many disputes with? If these apparent contradictions do indeed reveal limits to Realist theory, to where does the analyst turn to find completion?

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[9] In October 2004 China and Russia signed a border agreement, a Joint Action Plan for 2005-2008, and a joint communiqué. In December 2004 China and Russia signed a five-year agreement outlining military and technology cooperation (Bin). None of these events, however, are to the same degree and level of commitment seen in the US-Japan alliance. Also, China does have non-antagonistic relations with North Korea, and usually with South Korea, but does not have formal security alliances with them comparable to the US-Japan alliance.

Theories and Assumptions

Understanding the problem of the antagonistic China-Japan relationship, and thus answering the main thesis of this essay, is hindered by limitations of current political theories. Realism is accepted here as the best starting point – even if it is an incomplete one. The next section begins by considering two common Liberal theories, complex interdependence and institutionalism, to look for the missing piece needed to complete the analysis of China and Japan's antagonistic relationship. The purpose of choosing Liberal theory, which occupies the opposite end of the theoretical spectrum, is a dialectical one, and is therefore a logical point to proceed from. The second theory considered, Constructivism, is a newer theory that tries to bridge the gap between Realism and Liberalism. Conclusions made after this discussion lead to a consideration of the relationship between culture and power.

First, the Liberal theory of complex economic interdependence posits that the more economic linkages there are between two states, the less likely they are to take provocative actions that risk upsetting the mutually beneficial trading relationship they share (Yahuda). More open and freer trade is therefore promoted as a pathway to peace. Since the 1960s, China and Japan's level and intensity of trade with each other increased steadily to the point in 2004 of outgrowing even the US' levels with both countries. This essay began with the striking observation that China and Japan

recently became each other's top trading partner, but with no improvement in their confrontational posture towards each other. As such, economic progress has not translated into political progress between China and Japan as the Liberal theory predicts. The preference for the status quo (politically) has facilitated great mutual economic successes, but at the expense of the perpetuation of political standoffs on serious issues. Despite the importance of trade between the two, they remain standoffish and portray an image of their relationship as "natural rivals" (Funabashi 32), in a state of "strategic competition" (Feigenbaum 77), or full of, "visceral distrust" (Christensen 41). This is either a case of hypocrisy on a grand scale, or there is something more elusive and calculated happening underneath the surface. Both appear to be patronizing the other as if both are holding out until a future time when conditions are more in either's favor for the resolution of political issues in a certain way.

Second, common Liberal phenomena in the realm of security are global or regional multilateral institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), or The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The promotion and spread of multilateral forums for free and open dialogue is theorized to allow for greater understanding among member states thereby reducing the chance for *mis*understandings, mitigating the security

dilemma, and defusing potential conflicts resulting in solutions beneficial to the common good (Griffiths 95). However, when one looks to the region, there is no one over-arching security arrangement in this region, such as the OSCE for Europe, to handle Pacific security issues, nor is there a G8 (Japan is the only east Asian member) to handle economic concerns that are exclusively Asian in nature. APEC has the potential to fulfill this role, and has shown promise since formation, but several members reluctantly joined such a large grouping of states, and there still exists membership disputes such as China's continuing hesitance over the inclusion of Taiwan. Finally, author Dennis Patterson notes that a consensus on the necessary aspects of multilateral security arrangements is nonexistent in the region (11).

One existing security-related institution that, at first, shows promise is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which was created in 1994 to allow ASEAN to meet with its thirteen "participants" - Australia, Canada, China, the EU, India, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, South Korea and the US. An optimistic view of ARF as a breeding ground for China-Japan reconciliation might cite the recent surge in Chinese and Japanese interest in bilateral trade relations with ASEAN countries, and multilaterally via ASEAN +3 (Ahn 27-9). While the increase in Chinese or Japanese interest in deepening relations with ASEAN or with its individual members is not in question, the agenda and

motivations of China's and Japan's surge in interest there deserve inquiry, as they are more likely a result of the two competing for influence. Competing indirectly in a third location, another historical pattern, is nothing new for China and Japan given the long list of conflicts carried out on Korean soil, or during the period of 1609-1879 in the Ryukyu/Lui-Ch'iu Kingdom (explained in chapter three). To fully cooperate in ASEAN, China and Japan would be required to commit themselves to upholding the principles of the 'ASEAN way'. This 'way' is designed to engender security by removing the fear of external interference, allow national development, and foster national resilience. However, two main principles of the 'way', consultation and consensus, guide interactions that all members are expected to abide by such that; i) decision-making is achieved through consensus; ii) that if a compromise can not be found then the issue is adjourned, iii) members are prepared to defer their own interests to the interests of the association (Collins 104). Japan and China do not have a history of allowing multi-state consensus-based decision making nor deferring interests to external groups. As such, China and Japan's long-term commitment to ASEAN and the 'ASEAN way' should be treated with caution. Such aversion to meaningful international forums in northeast Asia is evidence of a natural disposition that favors secrecy, bilateral

relations, informal politics[10] and a preference to let military and cultural might dictate. Further, while liberal institutions in Asia in the economic realm are evident, the absence of them in the area of security is equally obvious and highlights the above normal ability of China and Japan to separate politics from economics.

If East Asia is devoid of Liberal institutionalism, and therefore cannot complete a Realist analysis, some contemporary writers try to bridge the divide between Realism and Liberalism with a newer theory called Constructivism which at first appears similar to the argument of this essay, but differs enough to warrant the following analyses of Constructivism's shortcomings. Constructivism is a theory about international relations that considers ideas and state identity to be the genesis of motivation and therefore recognizes and places power in the social features of state interaction (Griffiths 201). The term "relations", after all, is a social concept so Constructivists argue for a theory that includes social realities such as history, image, and preference (Berger 408-9). While this essay also argues for the inclusion of history in political analyses, the difference lies in Constructivism's benign view of culture (e.g. Copeland) compared to the more authoritative and powerful view held by China and Japan. Put more generally, Constructivism assumes that state interaction

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10 For more discussion on this topic see, Informal Politics in East Asia by Dittmer, Fukui, & Lee

can socialize states into certain patterns of behavior evolving from a Hobbesian 'culture' of compliance due to coercion, to a Lockean culture of compliance due to (mutual) self-interest, and finally to a Kantian culture of legitimacy (Copeland 194). Although Constructivism assumes that this socialization will move in a positive direction, such evolution in China-Japan political relations has yet to happen. If interacting and learning about each other leads to a negative experience, then friendship and trust will likely not result.

Regarding intent, Constructivism does not tell us what to expect when two major powers have the same, conflicting intents. In particular, Constructivism's cornerstone concept of a perpetual "intersubjective" process of co-reinforcement or co-reinvention only blurs considerations of state intent (Griffiths 201). In a perpetual cycle, the actions of state A impact state B in such a way as to cause a slight shift in its identity, which then triggers a shift in the original idea of self of state A. This makes Constructivism a 'means' theory and not an 'ends' theory in that it does not predict that either cooperation or conflict will specifically happen, only that either can happen. The only intent a state can have, then, is in regards to its identity and how other states perceive it. Another complication is that the basic stance of both China and Japan *towards each other* has not changed for over 1000 years, as argued

in chapter three. This is consistent with Realist theory, which argues that a state's basic nature as a selfish, competitive, and insecure entity never changes.

If Constructivism avoids reality by spreading itself too thin, if Liberalism is no help here, and if Realism is helpful only to a point, then analysts of China-Japan relations should consider culture to complete the Realist picture. Cultural-minded political scientists commonly cite the reason for the limited applicability of Realism in Asia is that 'Western' thinkers[11] developed the theory and evidenced it in European history alone, and therefore it cannot capture the same essence of international relations in East Asia (Ikenberry 1). In response to this apparent Realist shortcoming, there is a growing number of authors who argue for a culturally tempered Realist analysis.[12] For example, author Akira Iriye views international relations as, "interpower *and* intercultural relations" (Power vii). Authors Ronald J. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein similarly argue that, "…material power and coercion often derive their causal power from culture" (40).

Realism's main subject is power, and in this essay the term "culture" is also predominantly used to talk about power. To combine the two first requires distinctions to be made between culture and the concepts of civilization, history, and

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[11] For example, Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Locke, and Marx (Ikenberry 1).
[12] For example, Iain Johnston, Alan Whiting, Akira Iriye, Eric T.C. Cheow, Chih-Yu Shih, David Kang, Suisheng Zhao, Peter J. Katzenstein, G. John Ikenberry, Henry Nau, R.B.J. Walker, and Thomas Berger, among others.

memory. To German thinkers in the nineteenth century, civilization involves, "…mechanics, technology, and material factors…", but culture involves, "…values, ideals, and the higher intellectual artistic, moral qualities of a society" (Huntington 41). In other words, culture exists inside of the much broader concept of civilization. In the Chinese and Japanese context, both possess enduring civilizations (China more so than Japan), which are different from each other, but share certain aspects of each other's culture. In addition, culture and civilization are connected by memory of history. Such historical memory is sustained by oral, visual, ritual, and local cultural practices through which a community's collective remembrance of the past is produced or sustained (Connerton, in Linke 3). Memory is the practice or act of producing or sustaining collective remembrance of the past (de Certeau, in Linke 3). History, in contrast, is written or narrated representations of the past. Memory and history are different (Le Goff, in Linke 3) in that history, sustained by cultural practice, feeds memory – collective memory in particular. As such, history is related to culture only so far as the former is used to reconfirm the latter.

In the present context, Lucian Pye comments that, "The unshakable idea that China remains a great civilization fuels a comfortable superiority complex…" (74), or in other words, China's memory of its civilizational persistence reaffirms its

preexisting cultural belief in moral and qualitative superiority.[13] Analyses of China-Japan relations in this essay begins in the 7th century when Chinese culture was just that – a truly superior culture of ideas (in particular, Confucianism, the writing system, and the Chinese calendar) and relatively advanced forms of art, material objects, and medicine. Chinese culture also gave birth to a Chinese *political* culture[14] as interactions with external uncivilized groups, such as Japan, grew in frequency. Pye again offers the useful observation that, "The fact that the Chinese state was founded on one of the world's great civilizations has given inordinate strength and durability to its political culture. The overpowering obligation felt by Chinese rulers to preserve the unity of their civilization has meant that there could be no compromises in Chinese cultural attitudes about power and authority" (58).

Cultural Power

Realist theory describes all state interactions on the international level as a struggle for power in a world characterized by anarchy which forces states to act on the basis of self-help if they are to survive. Realists who argue along these lines include E.H. Carr, George Kennan, and Hans Morgenthau. Hans Morgenthau in

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13 This belief in superiority is so strong that Pye notes that China often finds a way to fault other states for any setback in relations, to the extent that China today does not have any particularly close allies (69-70).

14 For simplicity, the term "culture" is used throughout this essay instead of "political culture".

particular, who is regarded as the main originator of classical Realism, spent much of his attention discerning and categorizing the elements of national power. His two main categories of national power are material elements (military preparedness, industrial capacity, natural resources, geography), and human factors (population, national character, national morale, quality of diplomacy, quality of government) (106-158).

This view is illustrated as follows:

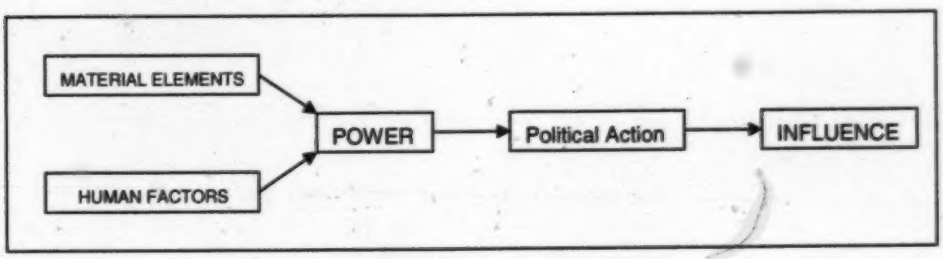

Diagram A – Classical Realism

Upon closer inspection of the above list however, there is room for the inclusion of culture in the consideration of a state's total national power. Although Morgenthau rarely uses the word "culture" in his discussion of the elements of national power, of all the elements above, "national character" and "national morale" address the nature of cultural power that exists between China and Japan. This argument is supported further by Morgenthau's general statement that power, "...may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man. Thus

power covers all social relationships which serve that end..." (9). Chinese culture historically served this control function over the states around it, except for Japan. This is the focus of chapter two.

Although Morgenthau allows for many kinds of power, national character and national morale garner relatively little attention in his key text, Politics Among Nations. One reason for Realism's reluctance to spend greater analyses on the human factors of national power is best offered by Morgenthau's own conclusion about their immeasurability such that, "...national character and national morale stand out...for their elusiveness from the point of view of rational prognosis..." (Morgenthau 122). Another reason for the exclusion of culture in Realism is that Realist case studies have so far tended to focus on conflicting states that by default have dissimilar cultures such as the US and the USSR, England and Germany, or the US and Vietnam. The unarticulated assumption then, is that culturally similar states will tend towards friendly and amicable political relations.[15] However, the case study chosen by this essay considers two states with similar cultures that act contrary

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[15] The Korean War at first appears to be an exception to this argument. However, that war was driven by ideological differences rather than cultural ones. China and Japan today also differ ideologically in much the same way that North and South Korea do, but ideological difference does not appear to be what is driving persistent antagonism in China-Japan political relations in that such antagonism existed long before the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949.

to that inherent and untested assumption when they act with persistent antagonism towards each other.

Morgenthau does admit about culture, albeit briefly, in his discussion about the elements of national power that, "...a government in its building of national power cannot be oblivious to the character of the nation it governs" (141); and that, "...national character cannot fail to influence national power..." (127); and in the present context that the Chinese, "...can look back upon a history of cultural attainments longer than any other..." (502). Similar and more recent statements that support an elevation of the role of culture in Realist theory, include R. B. J. Walker's view of culture and international relations as "emerging patterns of universality," (4) and Suisheng Zhao's summation that cultural power is, "...not simply an art of persuasion...it is hegemonic...(because) it provides a framework of values that each country either adapts itself to or loses its ability to guide action outside of its functional domain" (Power 8). Given the above comments, an adjustment to Diagram A is proposed as follows in Diagram B:

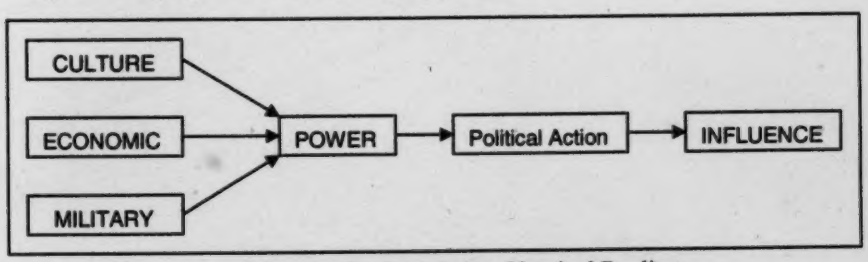

Diagram B – East Asian Classical Realism

The main difference between diagrams A and B is the regrouping of the elements of national power into three simple categories and a relabeling of these three main pillars of power – culture, economic,[16] and military. The first reason for doing this is to reintroduce into the lexicon of Realist theory the classical concepts of national character and morale which hereafter are considered part of cultural power.[17] The second reason is to elevate the significance of cultural forms of power by giving culture a singular heading rather than buried in a long list of variables with varying names. This simplification adds explanatory power to questions about China-Japan bilateral political relations. By exploring this unique case study of two conflicting states with similar cultures, this essay explores an uncharted part of a Realist map of international relations and thereby enables Realism to explore its full potential as a theory.

Following Diagram B through to the end, strength in the three pillars of power enables the state to take political actions that express its total power and thereby to ably influence others and signal preferred patterns of hierarchical alignment. The ability to generate influence over another state (the 'ends') can best

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[16] A discussion about political economic power could also occur at this point, but would be tangential to the main thesis of this essay.

[17] Population is moved to the economic pillar. Chinese population (1.3 billion) is too different than Japanese population (130 million) and therefore does not impact the cultural stalemate this essay argues for.

happen once all three forms of power are strong (the 'means'). Finally, although there can be similar military strengths (balance of power) and similar economic capacities and levels of economic satisfaction, both of which arguably allow for stability, the same statement about similarity as a source for stability can not be said for East Asian culture. China and Japan have similar cultures, but this instead results in instability and triggers the opposite effect - what Sigmund Freud labeled as the narcissism of minor difference, and is what this essay posits as one dynamic at work in the "culture" pillar in Diagram B.

In 1917 Freud observed, through his clinical practice, that "…it is precisely the minor differences in people who are otherwise alike that form the basis of feelings of strangeness and hostility between them" (Ignatieff 48). He labeled this phenomenon as 'the narcissism of minor difference'. Although his original area of analysis was between individual men and women, he shifted to the analyses of group differences five years later in a work titled, "Group Psychology and the Analyses of the Ego" (Ignatieff 49). Freud noted the paradox that the more two groups have in common the more likely they will be hostile towards each other. If "antagonistic self-definition" is narcissistic in that it promotes "self-love (which) works for the preservation of the individual…" then any difference is a criticism of oneself and triggers, "…a demand for their alteration" (Ignatieff 50). Freud remarked that,

> "Of two neighbouring towns, each is the other's most jealous rival; every little canton looks down upon the others with contempt. Closely related races keep one another at arm's length; the South German cannot endure the North German, the Englishman casts every kind of aspersion upon the Scot, the Spaniard despises the Portuguese. We are no longer astonished that greater differences should lead to an almost insuperable repugnance,..." (Ignatieff 49).

China and Japan would appear in the above list after examining their contentious relationship within the following assumptions:

i) China and Japan historically shared, among other things, an analogous view of the superiority of their own culture. (chapter two)

ii) China and Japan have enough in common today to trigger the narcissism of minor difference. The effect of this is pronounced enough to give us cause for concern about the present level of stability in the region. (chapter three)

In sum, the above thesis will be analyzed from a Realist perspective in terms of classical aspects such as the security dilemma, the pursuit of power in a world of anarchy, and Darwinist human nature. Michael Ignatieff extends Freud's concept by arguing that power, "...is the vector that turns minor into major difference" (50). Therefore, in order to capture the above-noted extra element found in China-Japan relations this essay will investigate the features of a kind of 'East Asian cultural

Realism'[18] between them by looking at the basis of present-day Chinese and Japanese state and popular nationalism when expressed towards the other.

While the concept of nationalism can be explained generally with classical Realist theory, because it only expresses itself in reaction to an identifiable 'other', it should be described using features unique to each nation or group of stakeholders in question. Only then can we discern what is at stake between China and Japan. In particular, Chinese and Japanese nationalism results when one state perceives that their current level of factual centrality does not equal their conceptual centrality.[19] Factual centrality varies over time depending on the ability of either to influence the other, which draws from military power, economic power, and cultural symbols of power,[20] all of which are attributed to a superior culture. In contrast, conceptual centrality is constant over time for both China and Japan who see themselves as the central authority in the East Asian hierarchy and therefore superior to the other.

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[18] Analyst Iain Johnston originally coined this term to describe the strategic *nature* of Chinese foreign policy during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), but his theory is of limited use here because he only analyzed the domestic level of foreign policy formulation and unfortunately Japan is barely mentioned. Also, the Ming Dynasty was one of the stronger ones so it is not clear if China would act the same aggressive way during times of dynastic weakness. For more information please see Cultural Realism (1995).

[19] Zhang introduces and discusses these terms, but only in regards to "conceptual Sinocentrism" which he argues is not constant and is being replaced by Paul Cohen's "incipient Chinese nationalism." For more please see China in the International System 1918-20 21-23.

[20] Almost any statistic or attribute that can be compared and utilized by the state government could be listed here such as Olympic medal counts, average height, crime rates, or high school test scores

Both China and Japan today experience a conceptual-factual gap in their respective centrality. Chapter three will explore what causes a state's factual centrality to fluctuate and the resulting antagonism and blaming between China and Japan.

Nationalism resulting from such a gap can be expressed either by the state, by the people, or both. Although the existence of state nationalism in China towards Japan is less apparent at times, incidences of popular nationalism in China, which are growing in frequency, will inevitably cause state nationalism to resurface thanks to Morgenthau's view stated above that "…a government in its building of national power cannot be oblivious to the character of the nation it governs" (141); and that, "…national character cannot fail to influence national power…" (127). If national character includes the opinions of the masses, then Chinese leaders can either act upon those opinions or risk being overthrown such as was the fear during the Tiananmen crisis in 1989. If both Chinese state and popular nationalism are generally in agreement with each other, the state does not need to be as vocal as the Chinese people, and even has to occasionally check popular nationalist outbursts against Japan before they grow and potentially turn against the Chinese government itself. This checking of popular sentiment sometimes creates the appearance that state nationalism against Japan does not exist and can therefore lead the political

analyst to false conclusions about Chinese nationalism. Therefore, Chapter three provides evidence of both state and popular nationalism in China and in Japan.

The next chapter uses the Realist, cultural, and narcissism theories and ideas presented above to link China's and Japan's actions in the past to the present antagonistic situation of China-Japan political relations. China traditionally ordered its foreign relations through a simple yet effective pattern of tribute from states who wished to trade and pay respect to the Chinese Emperor. The bulk of the literature on the Chinese tributary system has naturally been on relations with the main participants in the system. However, Japan eventually desired to duplicate China's central role and therefore would not participate in the system. Given this, there naturally is little literature on China-Japan relations vis-à-vis the tribute system,[21] and none to my knowledge try to use Japan's desire to become a Middle Kingdom of its own over the centuries as a harbinger of today's problems found in China-Japan relations – hence the title of this essay, "Contending Middle Kingdoms." Japan is the only 'sinicised' state, in China's view, that did not participate in the Sino centric tribute system. This dynamic alone warrants more investigation than there is today.

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[21] Possible exceptions include Ronald P. Toby's State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan (1984) which is limited to one era of Japanese history; and S.C.M. Paine's The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1985 (2003) which uses history to explain events up to the end of that war, but no further.

Chapter 2

A Common Heritage, A Common Liability

China and Japan have a surprising amount in common despite little interaction between the two after 894. In Japan, the strength and intensity of interaction and learning prior to 894 (Nara and early Heian periods) injected the same ideas and practices that propelled China through most of its long history. The result was that, although official relations abruptly ended in 894, Japan continued to spread the Confucian ideals of civilization throughout Japan so much so that by the 14th century the spirit of Chinese civilization was thoroughly adopted and naturalized in Japan (Holcombe 214). From that time on, outside influences were not strong enough to challenge the Chinese thoughts, and as Japan was well insulated until forced open in 1853, those original ideas and inventions became well entrenched.

Some critics to the idea of shared commonality might point out that China and Japan have less and less in common as their respective cultures grow and mature - especially when compared to the T'ang/Nara period. While it is true that some of the differences between the two are becoming more profound, what has not changed is that China and Japan continue to have the most in common culturally with each

other when either is compared to any other state, and that is why political relations between them are most likely to become hostile as per the narcissism of minor difference. Also, while they may not have as much in common today, they still have *enough* in common to perpetuate the Freudian potential for hostility and tension. It also does not matter if they really are similar or not, just that both perceive their sameness to be true. The evidence of this perceived sameness as a negative factor is the unique way they react to each other, as explained in chapter three. At the core of this sameness is their Confucian-based Sino/Nihon centric hierarchical worldview wherein the two states perpetually struggle to establish a superior-inferior relationship. Their shared view of power and shared understanding of what kinds of material and nonmaterial factors each find threatening are counted when calculating the balance of power between them. These shared views inherently put their bilateral relationship on an unstable intercept course. Looking back at Ignatieff's theory that, "power is the vector that turns minor into major difference", as China's and Japan's power grows, so does the potential for hostility to surface.

One exception to the above theory about sameness between China and Japan as a unique, impacting factor on relations is South Korea. Korea also learned much of its culture from traditional China, but in contrast to Japan, still maintains a relatively cordial relationship with China. However, this case will be left to later,

more comparative-based studies. If one reason can be offered here why South Korea and China have more amicable relations when compared to Japan today is that Korea did not fully leave the tribute system until 1895[22] - 1001 years later than when Japan cancelled what would become its final tribute mission to China. Also, as the victor in the Sino-Japan war in 1895, Japan forced Korea and China to suspend tribute activities, whereas Japan freely chose to distance itself from China. If the absence of tribute leads to greater independence and defiance to China, then Sino-Korean relations could deteriorate as well over time.[23] However, more in-depth analyses should be done before making any conclusions.

Another important similarity China and Japan share that supports the likelihood of Freud's scenario is the prevalence of Darwinian thinking in both states. In Japan, when making choices about the future of the nation, the ideas of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer regarding social Darwinism and survival of the fittest struck a chord with Japanese intellectuals and the Japanese imperative to survive with dignity in a new and hostile industrializing world despite being a small and weak

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[22] The 1876 Treaty of Kanghwa called for Korea to end tribute relations with China (Paine 45), but Korea maintained tribute rituals in secret until Japan forced China to formally end its suzerainty over Korea as a condition of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 (Zhao, Power 48).

[23] One recent source of such future instability perhaps could be over China's sudden claim that the Koguryo Kingdom (in the BC era) actually belonged to China. (Cheow 9). It is not unpredictable then when viewed under the above thesis that there is a rise of Korean nationalism against China (Cheow 9).

country (Miwa 2-3). In China, a young academic in the Chinese naval-school system, Yan Fu (1853-1921) became interested in Charles Darwin's theories on biological evolution and later in Herbert Spencer's extension of the theory of the "survival of the fittest" (a term Spencer coined in 1864) into the social realm (Spence 291). During the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), Fu read Thomas Huxley's critique of Spencer and, seeing what was happening around him, translated Huxley's book into Chinese in 1896. What made the translation so widely popular in China was Fu's added commentary which had a nationalistic emphasis not found in the original (Spence 291). As Spence noted, "...the survival of the fittest and the need for creative adaptation if species were to avoid extinction, seemed to Chinese to have a melancholy relevance to their nation's plight" (Spence 237). This "illiberal Darwinian view of the world" (Chang 194) meshed well with the Chinese worldview and so added a sense of urgency to the on-going decline of the Ch'ing Dynasty. At the time, this decline was evidenced by the continued loss of Chinese territory and unequal treaties with the West, and by the growing encroachment of a perceived Japanese Middle Kingdom. The theories of Darwin and Spencer, via Huxley and Fu, thus gave articulation to the situation and prescribed future courses of action for both states. Chinese and Japanese acceptance of such ideas were aided by mutually strong cultural dispositions fueled by the awareness of enduring civilizations and also

by the unalterable fact that they are permanent neighbors. Considerations of location accelerated the awareness of Darwinian survival scenarios when calculating the threat posed by the other.

There are also common cultural norms that influence both China and Japan when they consider each other. These cultural norms materialized via the conventions and rites imposed during the growth and decline of the tribute system (explained below), which saw culture used like any other realist yardstick. Although Japan did not participate nearly as much as others in a pattern of tribute, such as Korea, Vietnam (Annam), or the Ryukyu/Liu-ch'iu Kingdom, Japan did participate for almost three centuries (630-894) and briefly in the early 1400s (Wang 34-54). The above time frame excludes the first emissaries sent by King Na of Wa (AD 57), Queen Himiko (AD239), and later Kings of Wa because Japan was not yet a wholly unified state, as it is known today, until the beginning of the Nara period (710-794).

It should also be noted that, although the tribute system was not fully established as such until the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Japan and other countries sent emissaries to the capital of China in a tribute-like manner from a much earlier point in time (Zhang 10). The manner and form of these trips were close enough to the later mature form of the system such that China recorded and remembered the

missions as 'proof' of Japan's desire and ability to assume a vassal-like status to the Middle Kingdom. For example, in AD607 Japan sent what could be considered as its first envoy to China because it was the first time such an event's time and date matched in both Chinese and Japanese histories (Kuno 16). Subsequent visits to China were also of tributary capacity (Kuno 29-30). The 600s to the 900s was a critical time in Japan's development period (pre-Nara period and part of Heian period) when Japan was a young state, very open to influence and therefore impressionable. During these early centuries, when China's greatest export commodity was its culture, the bulk of Japan's copying and learning from China occurred, the spirit of Confucianism took hold, and the Middle Kingdom mentality established itself in the Japanese mindset (Barnett 89). This time period[24] is therefore the root of the sameness between China and Japan that, in terms of Freud's theory, raises the potential for hostility between these two contending Middle Kingdoms today (see below).

Origins of the Sino Centric Worldview

To understand the implications of the worldview Japan learned from China first requires understanding the basis of the Chinese worldview. China's actions and

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[24] In Japan this time period was referred to as *tosei mobo-jidai*, or "Period of Imitation and of the Copying of the Ideas, Methods, and Organization of the T'ang" (Kuno 28).

rhetoric today are remarkably similar to and influenced by its history over the past 2 millennia. The narcissistic Chinese view of the world and its self-ascribed place at the top (or rather, 'middle') of that hierarchical world grew with the influence of the ideas of Confucius (551 BC - 479 BC), also known as Confucianism, and as China gained more and more experience interacting with non-Chinese in the form of either trade or conflict. Even non-interaction was taken as a sign of an outsider's blindness to the supremacy of the Middle Kingdom. Confucianism stressed the importance of the Three Bonds and Five Relationships (*san gang wu chang*) between father and son, husband and wife, sovereign and minister, the old and the young, and between friends (Zhang 9). Each relationship stressed the benevolence of the former with the obedience of the latter, which then gave order to Chinese society.[25] Confucius did not say much about international relations except the generalizations that the Emperor, as the Son of Heaven, was the height of morality over "all under heaven" (*tian xia*); and *li* was, "...the principle of a rationalized social order and through it everything becomes right in the family, the state, and the world"[26] (Zhang 8-11). Although Confucianism essentially began as a domestic level set of beliefs, it was gradually

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[25] Mencius (372BC – 289BC) later explained the basis of each superior-inferior relationship as (in order) affection, righteousness, attention to their separate functions, a proper order, and fidelity (Mencius, Book III, Part 1, Ch.4) (Zhang 198, note 14).

[26] These three levels of society are similar to the three levels of analyses in Kenneth Waltz's, Man, The State, and War (1959).

re-interpreted and transplanted by future dynasties into China's system of international relations which is sometimes referred to in literature as the Chinese Worldview, Chinese World Order, or Sino centric world order.[27] China self-assumed the benevolent role in each of the Five Relationships. John K. Fairbank, a leading writer on this topic, even went so far as to label this Chinese view of how the world should be ordered as the, "Confucian world-order" (Ch'ing 107) and that it should be seen as, "...one historical solution to the problems of world organization" (Ch'ing 109).

The Chinese worldview was hierarchical, but the 'shape' of that hierarchy was not in the common western sense of some sort of pyramid or vertical line with the most powerful state in the system occupying the single top position. Instead, the shape more resembled a dartboard wherein only one – the most moral and most civilized – can exist in the middle and external groups aligned themselves accordingly. The Chinese emperor, at the symbolic centre of the Middle Kingdom, received the Mandate of Heaven for he symbolized the height of morality in the world which then allowed him to rule-by-virtue (*te*) (Fairbank, Chinese 15) over 'all under Heaven', which included both the Chinese people and barbarian groups. This Middle Kingdom worldview physically manifested itself later in what is referred to as the

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[27] Fairbank, Wang, Toby, among others.

tribute system. This physical manifestation allowed China to organize, align, and give meaning to its increasing number of interactions with less civilized, barbarian states, while at the same time reinforcing the Sino centric belief in superiority.

From as early as the Shang and Chou periods,[28] educated or learned Chinese saw themselves as the source of civilization from which superior culture flowed to lesser-civilized barbarians (Wang Early 36-7). As one ventured outward from the centre (the seat of the Emperor, to be exact), cultural refinement was assumed to steadily decline. Less civilized or "barbarian" groups could become 'sinicised' over time if they accepted their inferior status, followed Confucianist principles of philosophy and government, paid the proper respect and tributes to the Middle Kingdom, and observed the 'right' cultural practices. However, this process was not perpetual and acceptance of China's 'offer' was not always enthusiastic, and therefore the borders of the Middle Kingdom waxed and waned for centuries depending on the reach of Chinese culture. This reach depended on the organizational strength of the Chinese Emperor, his perceived legitimacy, the level of domestic stability, possession of superior cultural ideas and artifacts, regulation of trade, and the strength of the armed forces.

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[28] Shang Period (1766BC – 1122BC or 1027BC). Chou Period(s) 1122BC or 1027BC – 403BC) (Fairbank East back end paper).

The barbarians on the fringes of Chinese society were usually left alone if they did not disturb China's frontiers. However, if they wanted to trade with China, or if China wanted to trade with them to induce 'cooperation', then the barbarians had to resign to a position of subservience along the shared border regions as a precondition to entering into trade and political relations. This attitude was for two reasons. First, tribute missions to Peking were not profitable for the Chinese court (Mancall 41), and second, China was regarded as the home of an advanced civilization with the supposed source of superior culture. This led to a strong sense of cultural, economic, and material self-sufficiency, and thus Chinese traders were not allowed to leave the Middle Kingdom to go and seek out new and greater markets for there was no perceived need to (Mancall 11). Because China gave more than it received from a tribute mission, and allowed missions to visit despite an absence of desire to interact with outsiders, there is evidence that the Chinese court engaged in trade primarily as a political tool to control outsiders and, in doing so, to create or maintain a buffer zone surrounding the Middle Kingdom.[29] Chinese rulers thus learned to use the attraction of Chinese culture, in all its shapes and forms, to its advantage in controlling less civilized groups, or barbarians, on China's vast frontiers.

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[29] China did engage in two other types of trade-focused trade. See Mancall, China at the Centre.

When China was experiencing a period of weakness, greater and easier access to trade and cultural goods were offered as one way to help maintain barbarian stability on the frontiers (Mancall 40-44, Zhang 10). Over time, the Chinese court came to use trade as an aspect of power and control in times of both strength and weakness, which served a useful purpose along China's distant and many borders. This trade was coupled with the premise that the fellow trader also gained privileged access to advanced Chinese culture. Chinese culture, under the guise of trade, became a control mechanism and allowed the court to project its power at a distance. As such, if China's cultural reach waned resulting in its 'borders' contracting, it was only at the equal gain in territory and influence of an external group or nation. Because the 'borders' of Chinese cultural sovereignty could reach only as far as the strength of Chinese culture did, China's border was very fluid and open to interpretation. A loss in cultural reach meant an immediate gain of an outside group, which equaled a zero-sum loss in security for China, which triggered the realist security dilemma and subsequent Chinese political maneuvering and posturing. Johnston's groundbreaking work, Cultural Realism, studied the pattern of the use of force during the Ming Dynasty and also noted that China viewed stakes in zero-sum

terms (30), but did not include the rise of cultural power of an external group as one of the stakes as is done in this essay.[30]

Not only was precious territory lost to an outside barbarian group, but also the loss symbolically represented the loss of the Mandate of Heaven granted to the Chinese emperor at the time requiring a change of leadership and consequently a loss of domestic stability. Because changes of succession were often times of great turmoil, it was important for the Chinese Emperor and his Imperial Court to secure itself both along its extensive frontiers and within the Middle Kingdom. However, if ominous signs such as natural disasters or border and trade disputes appeared, this symbolized the loss of the Mandate of Heaven requiring the Emperor's replacement. In turn, a rise in domestic weakness invited further intrusion from outside groups hoping to take advantage of the instability often seen during times of leadership changes. As such, domestic stability was, and continues to be today, one of the most important goals of Chinese leadership.

The Tribute System in General

As early as the late 3rd century AD the briefly reunified Western Chin Dynasty in China reported receiving tribute emissaries from over 200 kingdoms of

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30 Considerations of cultural power would have led Johnston to a much deeper examination China's relationship with Japan during the Ming period.

eastern barbarians in a sixteen-year period - most of which were from the Korean peninsula (Holcombe 171). A system of regulation of interactions with outsiders grew throughout the T'ang Dynasty, the Song Dynasty (960-1279), and became firmly consolidated later in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) (Fairbank, Ch'ing 107-246). The growth and influence of this system resulted in over 500 tribute missions from 62 countries during the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911).

The tribute system served to both reinforce the Chinese belief in a Sino centric world order and to insulate the Middle Kingdom by "investing" (*feng*) loyal hereditary "vassals" (*fan*), who in turn presented the Emperor with "tribute" (*kung*) (Fairbank, Chinese 7). The Chinese character for *fan* basically translates as "a hedge; a boundary; a frontier; to screen; to protect" (Fairbank, Chinese 7). These terms highlight the historical grounding that compelled Chinese culture to view relations with outsiders in zero-sum terms. If China lost a tributary, then it lost not only legitimacy but also a certain amount of its protective boundary by as much as that tributary was in size. For example, China lost the tributary of Japan in 894 and thus some of China's cultural buffer zone. Most bilateral relation scenarios were viewed under this pessimistic belief and fear of the worst-case scenario where the loss

of ability to control a tributary represented both a loss of security and a loss of Heaven's blessing.[31]

After the fractious Six Dynasties period (AD220-AD589), the highly unified T'ang Dynasty consolidated its power and strengthened its borders by improving its legitimacy through the gradual regulation of all foreign contact and trade. Around this time an identifiable system of periodic and more formalized tribute began to reveal a regular pattern of behavior. Prior to this time, official visits were still paid to the Chinese court, but were too sporadic and too far apart to be connected in any analyzable way. The tribute system later came to be characterized by periodic tribute missions to the Emperor's court in the capital of Peking designed to symbolize the visiting state's compliance and deference to the supremeness of China and thus served as a control mechanism and tool to project China's power at a distance. Visiting embassy missions had to enter the kingdom through designated border entry points, had to travel along certain routes leading to Peking (or wherever the Emperor's throne was located), and had to be escorted at all times. Once in the

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[31] Works by authors such as John E. Wills, Jr.'s Embassies and Illusions: Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to K'ang-hsi, 1666-1687 and James Hevia's Cherishing men From Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793 offer evidence of flexibility in the tribute system. However, these works and other similar works only focus on China's management of relations with tribal groups in China's western reaches, or with European emissaries, rather than with sinicised states such as Japan which is the focus of this paper. Second, flexibility in tribute requirements does not necessarily equate to flexibility in the Chinese worldview.

Chinese high court the visiting ambassador had to kowtow three times in front of the Emperor,[32] and then present gifts (*gong*), which were often unusual objects of art, rare items, or silver, and sometimes entertainment, women, and feasts were exchanged (Mancall 55). There were benefits for the visitors as well, however. In exchange, China paid for the visit, offered valuable gifts, and offered its 'patent of authority' or 'patent of office' to the foreign ruler, which today is similar to the concept of diplomatic recognition but without equality. The tribute system also served an important domestic level function by insulating the somewhat xenophobic, and therein narcissistic, kingdom from foreign invaders and, just as importantly, from foreign influence and ideas. By controlling the inflow of tribute missions, the Chinese court maintained unity within the kingdom, generated stability along the borders, and upheld an image of superiority needed to legitimize the dynasty.

Paying tribute was not unique to East Asia (Zhang 10). European states also paid tribute for protection from others plus protection from the state receiving tribute. In China's case, however, although tribute only meant access to trade, Chinese culture, and in some cases protection from a 3rd party, the tribute was not needed to ensure protection from China itself because of a lack of expansionist history. China was more concerned with having foreign representatives come to the capital for

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[32] One *kowtow* was one obeisance of one prostration with forehead to the ground.

it was a great source of 'face' and legitimacy for the Chinese high court, and added to the growing narcissistic belief in the Chinese worldview.

One final characteristic of the Sino centric worldview was its view of non-Chinese or 'other'. China originally placed all outsiders into one group. One was either Chinese or not Chinese. However, as certain outside states interacted and learned more from China, the Ch'ing later split China's view of 'other' to allow outsiders to belong to either the Northern Crescent area, or to a now sinicised part of Asia which included the 'vassal' states of Korea, Siam/Thailand, Annam/Vietnam, Burma, the Ryukyu Kingdom (Okinawa), and Japan. The Court of Colonial Affairs, also known as the *Lifan Yuan* or Barbarian Control Office, managed relations with the former group, and the Chinese Board of Rites managed the latter group (Paine 68). Categorizing and differentiating the two this way during the Ch'ing Dynasty helps to understand the impact of such a long-standing label on Japan when evaluating relations between the two. Japan only briefly participated in the Sino centric system – 750 years before the Ch'ing categorization. However, it was enough for China to categorize Japan within the group of other sinicised states such as Korea, Vietnam, and the Liu-ch'iu/Ryukyu Kingdom.

Japan and the Sino Centric World Order

From about the late 4th Century onwards, Japan enjoyed healthy trade with China, recognized the great potential offered by such a civilized kingdom, and imported many cultural ideas and philosophies from China such as literature, poetry, the Chinese calendar, the Chinese character writing system, Buddhism, and Confucianism. This was during the time of the Six Dynasties in China when there was a great deal of originality in culture and thought, which helped spur desire from non-Chinese to learn and gain from China ("Six"). Perhaps encouraged by the long period of division and imperial weakness within a benign China, Japan experienced one of its greatest periods of learning from China (Holcombe 227). By the 5th century, the Yamato court in the Kingdom of Wa was actively sending tribute embassies to the continental Southern dynasties (Holcombe 212).

As the T'ang Dynasty grew and a system of tribute became more and more apparent, state formation efforts in Japan also accelerated thanks to the emulation of Chinese concepts in areas such as government bureaucracy, law, and farmland allocation (Holcombe 202-5). It was only natural then that Japanese foreign policy grew to mimic the Chinese worldview as a Middle Kingdom of its own. The new Nara government (710-784) enjoyed the prestige that came from their exclusive control over the acquisition and distribution of luxurious continental goods known as

karamono ("T'ang things") (Holcombe 191). "This state monopoly, in turn, was greatly facilitated by the imported Chinese political principle, much in force in contemporary T'ang, that the only acceptable form of foreign contact was the formal tribute embassy" (Holcombe 191). The capital at Nara was even styled after the grand Chinese T'ang Dynasty capital at Chang'an. With the rapid import of goods and ideas there is an argument for the Japanese importation of *karagokoro* or "Chinese Spirit" (Jansen 10-11). This period of amity lasted up until around 762. However, "The more some early Japanese came to think 'like the Chinese,' the more they would naturally want to envision Japan as a Middle Kingdom at the center of its own All-Under-Heaven, and the more intolerable Chinese imperial pretensions would come to be seen" (Holcombe 211).[33] As such, Japan withdrew from participation in a pattern of tribute[34] for domestic reasons, from indignation over China's arrogant attitude towards Japan, from the humiliating practices emissaries had to perform in front of the Chinese emperor, and, most importantly, a desire to become their own Middle Kingdom. In 894 Japan canceled a scheduled tribute embassy to China and thereafter withheld all forms of tribute from the Japanese islands (Norihito 125).

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[33] Why this same conclusion was not reached in other sinicised vassal states would make an interesting study. Perhaps geographical separation gave Japan the added confidence and stronger conception of separateness from the mainland. However, the Ryukyu case is an argument to the contrary.

[34] This is difficult to claim. Japan's only period of sending emissaries to China was during the T'ang Dynasty between 630-894 when a pattern of tribute was still in formation.

It is in the above context that the cultural rivalry began. More and more Japan styled itself as its own Middle Kingdom. It may have started unintentionally, for the Japanese court had no other model to build from than that of the Chinese government. For example, Chinese political terms such as "All Under Heaven", or "vassal" became the norm in Japan when describing relations (Holcombe 212). The original Chinese character for "vassal", represented by the Chinese character *fan* in Japanese becomes *han* or daimyo domains of Tokugawa feudalism (Fairbank, Chinese 10). As the Japanese state grew in self-awareness and confidence, the use of these terms became more deliberate such as, "...the selection of the 'extremely Chinese' new imperial title J: *tenno* (C: *huangdi*) in the 7th century was designed to simultaneously proclaim the Japanese monarch's superiority over the mere "kings" of Korea and rivalry with the imperial Sons of Heaven in China" (Holcombe 212). The infamous, yet precedent-setting correspondence from the Yamato embassy to China in 607 was addressed from the, "Son of Heaven in the place where the sun rises, to the Son of Heaven in the place where the sun sets" (Holcombe 212). This type of address was incomprehensible to China under the Sino centric worldview where there can be only one Son of Heaven, plus the obvious anti-Chinese symbolism that Japan regards itself as the origin of enlightenment rather than China. Soon Japan tried to use formerly Chinese tributary-type terminology to conceive of the new Korean

kingdom of Silla as a vassal state of Japan, rather than of China, obliged to pay tribute to the Japanese *tenno*, (Holcombe 213) and later in regards to the Ryukyu/ Liu-Ch'iu Kingdom which will be examined below.

As mentioned, Japan could not willingly accept the status of China's inferior vassal and so did not participate in the Sino centric world order after 894. One notable exception to this Japanese attitude towards China was a brief period during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) when the Sino centric tribute system was most apparent. This exception, the only case of Japan willingly submitting itself as a vassal to the Middle Kingdom after 894, warrants further discussion. In response to threats from China over constant Japanese pirate attacks, Prince Kanenaga[35] in 1371 deceived China into believing he represented all of Japan and not just his Southern Court in Kyushu. He presented tribute to the Chinese Emperor and received the odd title of "King of Japan" (Wang 16). However, his subsequent tributes were not of sufficient quality and so his tribute missions were often denied by the Chinese court and generated further threats of invasion from China. One notable response from Hung-wu (1368-98), the first Ming ruler, began abruptly with, "You stupid eastern barbarians!" and ended with, "…you are haughty and disloyal…will this not inevitably bring disaster upon you" (Wang 17)?

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[35] This name is inexplicably reversed in Chinese texts to "Nagakane" (Wang 11).

After several years of diplomatic work, Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu built on Kanenaga's efforts and in 1401 successfully declared himself a "subject" of China and restored tributary relations in order to receive the Middle Kingdom's patent of authority and, just as importantly, to obtain a license to trade (*kangou*) (Toby 58).[36] Since Japanese traders were not allowed to trade without permission from the Shogun, Yoshimitsu gained legitimacy to rule by being the one to control the *kangou*. The Ming government also benefited from this thaw in relations for two reasons. First, since China desired Japan's support in suppressing Japanese pirate activity along China's coastline, the *kangou* helped identify pirates from legitimate traders. The agreement also funneled all Japanese trading ships through the Chinese port at Ningpo (Wang 36). Second, China desired the return of Japan back into the tribute system because it was what the Sino centric world order demanded and would be a great source of legitimacy for the Ming rulers.

Yoshimitsu's actions were not popular within Japan, however. His Chinese-given title of "King of Japan" and the idea of normalizing tribute relations with China were both seen as losses of sovereignty to China (Toby 58). Before long,

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[36] According to Wang, he may also have been simply ignorant of the ramifications of such a declaration; or he aimed to profit; or the influence of Japanese Zen Buddhist monks, who held China in high regard, translated all Chinese documents for Yoshimitsu because his generals could not read Chinese (34). In all likelihood it was a combination of many of these factors.

however, Yoshimitsu died in 1408 and his son, Ashikaga Yoshimochi, abruptly reversed his father's friendly policy towards China, stopped sending tribute to China, and denied missions of enquiry to Japan from the Chinese court. In 1417, the Emperor of China, Yung-lo, asked Yoshimochi to repent and change his disobedient attitude in a letter that included statements such as, "No longer do you present tribute…Is this the way to serve your superior?…With your acts of thieving like a dog or pilfering like a rat…" (Wang 48). Wang cites further threats of invasion from China until 1426 when Shogun Yoshinori Ashikaga finally responded favorably to Chinese requests for Japan to re-enter the tribute system. However, Yoshinori was very materialistic and merely patronized China's Sino centric ego for the sake of trade and profit. As mentioned earlier, tribute missions to the capital were more costly to China than to the tribute sender. However, some trading was also allowed which, to the Chinese, was a mere sideline to the act of receiving tribute itself, but to the Japanese it was the main event. Under the terms of the tribute agreement, Japan was to send tribute once every ten years with strict limits on quantities traded, but Japan soon turned this into an almost annual mission and brought greater amounts of goods for trade than allowed by the Chinese tribute regulations. These missions often stayed in the Chinese capital at China's expense for up to two years while they bargained until they got the prices they wanted. During these stays in the capital the

Japanese were often disrespectful to their Chinese hosts, caused a lot of trouble and stirred up a lot of unrest. Finally in 1547 the Ming rulers had had enough of Japan's trouble making and profiteering under the guise of tribute and relations ended once again (Wang 60-80).

Other than the time from 1401 to 1408, can the above events be considered as a time when Japan earnestly participated in the Chinese tribute system? Given the number of problems, the harsh tone of rhetoric from China at the time, and the evident Japanese patronizing and profiteering, this time period shows further Japanese disregard for China's demands and self-assumed position of superiority. These events served to further solidify China's opinion of Japan's traitorous nature and further proof of Japan's constant disregard for the Sino centric world order.

As mentioned, the Chinese worldview allowed for barbarian states to choose to remain outside the system of tribute if they so desired (Zhang 10). These states would be left alone to muddle about in the darkness of their ignorance of the supremacy of the Middle Kingdom. This would have been true for China's view of Japan (who participated relatively little in the Chinese world order) if it were not for Japan's efforts to style itself as its own Middle Kingdom and therefore create its own *nihon*centric world order. This was threatening to China who could have invaded Japan if it were not for the perilous journey across the Sea of Japan, the often-unstable

Sino-Mongolian relations (Wang 2), and the failure of the two attempted Mongol invasions in 1274 and 1281[37] (Zhao, Power 20). Although there were many threats of invasion (Wang 17-19, 43) from China, the two states were left for centuries like two cultural icebergs grinding beneath the surface.

It is also illuminating to look at the events surrounding the Ryukyu/Liu-Ch'iu Kingdom because they highlight the growing cultural tug-of-war for influence between China and Japan over a 3rd territory. From 1372 to 1879, the Ryukyu/Liu-Ch'iu Kingdom was a faithful tributary to China sending nearly annual tribute missions to Fukien province (Ch'en 135). For Japan, the Kingdom had long been an important vehicle for trade with the continent and other areas, and in 1472 the Satsuma house loosely asserted its authority over the islands in the hopes of monopolizing trade (Sakai, 116). From 1480 onwards, occasional tributes were sent to the house of Satsuma in Kagoshima, but in 1609, after much turmoil surrounding the activities of Hideyoshi, with permission of Shogun Ieyasu in Edo, Satsuma successfully invaded the Kingdom and in 1611 won their full subordination (Sakai 118). The Kingdom, however, was 'allowed' to continue its regular tribute missions to China as long as Japan maintained access to trade with the continent via the islands,

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[37] As a result of these conditions, Hung-wu, first ruler of the Ming, decreed that the, "...Chinese should never attempt to conquer countries beyond the sea which were causing no trouble" (Wang 2).

and just as importantly, as long as the Ryukyu/Liu-Ch'iu Kingdom sent proper tribute to Japan, which they regularly did to Satsuma and twenty-one times to Edo from 1634 to 1850 (Toby 48-9). During this time Japan treated the Kingdom much like China did of its tributaries, and also told them when to send tribute to China, what to say, and approved each new Ryukyu King (Sakai 118-132). The main difference was that Japan's authority was in secret[38] so as to not jeopardize vital access to trade on the continent and out of fear of Manchu ambitions after their seizure of power from the Ming in 1644 (Norihito 138). One final difference was that Japan's legitimacy in the Kingdom was based on force whereas China's was based on supposed cultural and moral superiority. Since all of Japan's foreign trade was by ship, it is arguable that Japan allowed this example of contending Middle Kingdoms to continue for so long thanks to the natural shipping lanes the long archipelago offered.

At about the same time, early in the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), Japanese attempts at rapprochement with China, for trade purposes only, failed due to improper wording in official written communications that were incomprehensible to the Chinese worldview. The letters seemed to outline what author Mizuno Norihito labeled as a "Tokugawa worldview" (121-2). A letter in 1611 in particular spoke of

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[38] There is debate in the literature as to whether or not China knew of Japan's active role in the Kingdom, but if China knew, it is not clear why they did nothing about it.

"two universes" (*niten*)[39] centered on China and Japan, and described the visits of missions to Japan from Korea, Ryukyu/Liu-Ch'iu, Vietnam, and Siam using the tributary-like term of *onrei* (gratitude and obedience) (Norihito 121). These were supposed to be examples, to China in particular, of the spread of Japanese moral sway (i.e. cultural power), and although in reality this was far from the truth, China found the Tokugawa beliefs to be both insulting and threatening. The Tokugawa bakufu military government rejected Chinese attempts to assign the lesser title of "King" to the Shogun of Japan and devised the title, for use in all future diplomatic correspondence, of *nihon koku taikun* (Grand Prince of Japan) – a new title not seen before in East Asia (Toby 85). These events, among others were an open declaration of independence from the Chinese world order and, at the same time, for a new nihon-centric order in East Asia (Toby 85-8).

China was concerned, not about Japan's acceptance of Confucianism as part of the desired and 'natural' process of becoming sinicised like other East Asian states did, but about the nihoncentric conclusions Japan made about Confucianism. While other sinicised states deferred to China in foreign affairs, Japan did not and, like China, used Confucianism as the basis of a Japan-centered Middle Kingdom hierarchy

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[39] Japan seemed to envision a world with two Middle Kingdoms, while China only one. Whether or not this is accurate, and whether or not this was due to their differing religious/spiritual groundings, is beyond the scope of this essay.

in East Asia. Early Tokugawa scholar Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619), followed by his disciple, Hayashi Razan, and later by his son and successor as shogunal Confucianist, Hayashi Gahou, maintained the belief in Confucian-type hierarchies, but with Japan existing under a heaven different than the one China lived under (Toby 221-2). Later followers of Razan and Gahou, disturbed by the Ming loss to the 'barbarian' Manchus in 1644, inflated the centrality of Japan. For example, the Kimon School of thought headed by Yamazaki Ansai (1618-1682) resembled a modern nationalism (Toby 225), and Yamaga Sokou (1622-1685) argued, "...for the positive superiority of Japan over China because it epitomized the virtues of Confucianism better than China..." (Toby 226). The impact of these thinkers, along with Asami Keisai (1652-1711), gives enough evidence to the modern-day scholar, Bitou Masahide, to argue that the period of 1661-1680 was critical to Japan's full transformation into a central kingdom (Toby 222). After this time period Japan isolated itself and little contact was made with China until shortly after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. By this time, China was weak and Japan was poised to put its belief in its own centrality as a Middle Kingdom into action.

Relations from 1868 to the end of WWII

The Meiji Restoration in Japan in 1868 ended the Tokugawa era and brought Japan into the modern era. At that time, the Ch'ing Dynasty in China was falling

apart and was overrun by western imperialist powers. Japan seized the opportunity of its rising power and China's falling power and level of influence in Asia by taking the first of many steps to assert its authority and centrality in the region by gaining full control over the Ryukyu/Liu-Ch'iu Kingdom, which Japan achieved via an agreement with China in 1874. This agreement was intended to compensate the families of Ryukyu fishermen murdered by Formosan (Taiwanese) aborigines in 1871 in exchange for the withdrawal of Japanese ships from Taiwan (Paine 90).[40] China did not realize that the agreement made the Ryukyu inhabitants into Japanese citizens and so tried to renegotiate the agreement until 1879 when Japan unilaterally annexed the islands. Annexing the islands was not a random spontaneous act by Japan, but rather a calculated show of superiority to its former mentor. China could have reacted more strongly to the Japanese move, but was more concerned with Russia along its northern border and therefore had to at least maintain an image of cooperation with Japan to counterbalance the Russian threat.[41] A muted Chinese response however, did not mean that China would forget this modern day example of Japan 'taking' culture, influence, and property from China without proper payment.

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[40] The three-year delay in responding to the murders might indicate that the Meiji government waited until they needed an event to stir up nationalist sentiment in Japan (Paine 90).

[41] This was advised by General Ulysses S. Grant (Miwa 4).

In cultural realist terms, this is a direct loss of power in that China's influence was reduced and Japan's was equally increased.

With this, the stage was set for Fukuzawa Yukichi's writing of *Datsuaron* on March 16, 1885 (Miwa). As an early example of Japanese nationalism, Fukuzawa advocated in a few simple passages for Japan to one day defeat China in Korea (China's tributary) so that in the eyes of the West, Japan would be seen as stronger than or 'above' China and therefore not worthy of attacking. This was a risky strategy because it may have relied on hopes that the West would be able to understand the real concept of 'face' that China would lose from the loss of a tributary state and the resulting gain of the nihoncentric Middle Kingdom. 'Departing' from Asian backwardness, getting the West out, and ending Japan's unequal treaties were initial and necessary steps on the road to becoming the Middle Kingdom in East Asia.

At around the same time as Japan's seizure of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Japan was taking other strides in Korea to widen its self-ascribed role as the new Middle Kingdom at China's expense. The Treaty of Kanghwa on February 22, 1876, the first treaty between the two since the 1609 Korea-Japan Treaty, expanded Japan's access to Korean ports from one to four,[42] and granted extraterritoriality to Japanese, but not to Koreans (Paine 42-5). In this case, Korea accepted Japan's own version of

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[42] This would help Japan's desire to facilitate the growth of the rising merchant class.

an unequal treaty in the hopes that it would counter-balance Russian designs in or near Korea for an ice-free port on Russia's southeastern perimeter. Most relevant to this thesis, the 1876 treaty ended Korea's tributary status with China by declaring Korea an "…independent state" (Paine 45). However, Korea disregarded Japan and maintained tributary rituals with China in secret until Japan forced China to fully recognize Korean independence on April 7, 1895 as one Japanese-ordered condition of the Treaty of Shimonoseki at the end of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 (explained below) (Zhao, Power 48). To Korea, Japan may have been more powerful and able to counterbalance the Russia threat in 1876, but China was still seen as the authority deserving of tribute. To this end, Japan needed to take much more drastic strides in its goals of centrality.

Japan also added insult and acted contradictorily towards the Sino centric worldview by defeating China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5. This defeat was culturally humiliating to China for two reasons. First, the war and subsequent defeat occurred in Korea which was the most loyal cultural ally in the Chinese tribute system from its beginning wherein Korea ascribed to Chinese culture, Confucianism, and deferred to China's superiority. In theory such loyalty required protection by China against aggressive third parties – something that was painfully not true now. Second, as a result of winning the war, Japan took over Taiwan, a sinicised, and hence cultural,

property of China.[43] Both cases exposed China's inability to use its culture to control its tributaries, and symbolized the Chinese Emperor's inability to maintain stability along its border regions and thus a loss of the Mandate of Heaven. Losing the Ryukyus, Taiwan, defeat in Korea, and losing Korea after the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 was one problem, but to lose them to a former pupil of Chinese culture and supposed sinicised Asian nation was humiliating, incomprehensible, and very threatening.

The growing frustration and disbelief with Japan's continued acts of contempt culminated in the anti-Japanese May Fourth Movement in 1919 which was a culmination of previous anti-foreign demonstrations such as the Boxer Rebellion in 1901 and of events during WWI. In 1914, Japan declared war on Germany and later gained control of Chinese territory leased to Germany, in 1898, in Jiaozhou in Shandong Province (Zhang 40). At the end of WWI, during the negotiations of the Versailles Treaty at the Paris Peace Conference,[44] China hoped that the territory would be returned to them, but it soon became clear that the Western powers would 'side' with Japan and allow them to retain the territory. As a result, on May 4th,

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[43] Although Taiwan was not a tributary state in the Sino centric world order as defined here, the Manchu declaration of Formosa (Taiwan) as a Fujianese dependency in 1683 removed any ambiguity in China's view of Taiwan as part of China (Mancall 150).

[44] For an excellent and detailed description of these events see Zhang, 39-99.

1919 in Beijing, about 5000 students protested the decision. Soon protests and strikes spread to Shanghai followed by a nationwide boycott of Japanese goods. Years of foreign aggression and the subsequent end of the tribute system and shattering of the Chinese worldview finally found its voice – and the first word of that new found voice was "Japan." Such a large nationalist uprising against Japan at that time was fueled by the history of Japan's cultural 'debt' to China, the narcissism of minor difference, and the symbolism attached to the most recent area ceded to Japan. Jiaozhou is only 200 square miles and a relatively small area compared to the many other losses of territory to both Japan and other foreign powers. However, it is also in the same province where Confucius was born and is buried, which symbolically was too much for China to take. Comparing the Chinese reaction to the first 'loss' of the territory to Germany to the second 'loss' of it to Japan, there is a much larger response in the second case. In Freud's terms, Japan had more in common with China than China had with Germany which meant that the Japanese occupation was more threatening to China than the German one and so the stakes were higher in the Japanese case. Given the distrust of the Japanese, there were also suspicions of what Japan would 'take' next. The Japanese threat was also much more immediate given the geographical closeness of the two states when compared to the distant German centre of influence, and Japan had no direction to expand but westwards. Finally,

the loss symbolized the further encroachment of Japanese culture into Chinese territory – a place that Chinese culture was supposed to protect. This effectively ended an assumption that lasted for over 2000 years, and began a new wave of Chinese nationalism against Japan. China saw each case as a loss of Chinese culture, and an equal gain in Japanese power.

From the 1920s onwards Japan continued to represent a serious political, military, and cultural threat to China through Japan's continued growth in popularity among Western powers, translated into cultural strength, and military prowess. To add to the symbolic reversal of positions in China-Japan relations, Japan passed a Special Account Bill which created the China Cultural Affairs Bureau in 1923 to 'manage' cultural affairs that related to China (Teow xi). This reversal of roles is comparable to China's earlier original Ch'ing concept of the Chinese Board of Rites which, among other functions, managed affairs with sinicised vassal states including Japan. Whether Japan had China's best interests at heart[45] did not matter, for from the Chinese viewpoint the new Bureau was another symbol of Japan's casting of China into an inferior and less civilized role which is what China had done to Japan for centuries. This was opposite to the Chinese worldview that, although no longer

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[45] Such as was claimed during attempts to build a Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere.

physically realized through the system of tributes, was still engrained in the Chinese consciousness. This latter concept is what author Zhang Yongjin labels as "conceptual Sinocentrism" which still persists long after the end of the "factual" Sinocentric world order (21). Chapter three looks at the growing level of Chinese nationalism today as an expression of the tension between the end of the latter and the continued presence of the former.

Japanese attempts to establish itself as a modern Middle Kingdom accelerated through the 1930s in its military and cultural efforts to create the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Under the eventual claim of liberating Asia from Western imperialism, Japan invaded and gained control of parts of northern China. Japan defended its actions, no matter how atrocious, on cultural grounds as evidenced by many Japanese propagandist writers at the time (Iriye, China 78-80). Iriye remarks that the general theme of the Japanese argument was that, "...the two countries must cooperate for their common good, and that there was some historical and moral significance to this task" (China 80-81). The originator of the phrase "*Toa kyodotai*" (East Asian cooperative order)[46] wrote that, "Japan aimed at promoting a new cultural consciousness in Asia...and one that was to create a new worldview" (Iriye, China 81). To China, preventing Japanese expansion on the

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[46] Also translated in other works as "Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere."

continent would require both military and cultural transformations. For example, like the May 4th Movement, the December 9th movement[47] was a nation-wide campaign aimed at strengthening and reinvigorating Chinese culture in the face of Japanese military and cultural imperialism (Iriye, China 84). Chiang Kai-shek declared in 1937 that the struggle against Japan pitted, "…Chinese culture against Japanese barbarism" (Iriye, China 86). Chinese resistance, however, was not enough to stop Japanese expansion and eventually, in the early 1940s, Japan gained control of Vietnam - another former tributary of China.

The next chapter begins with events in 1972 and will use the theoretical framework outlined in chapter one with the historical backing in this chapter to re-characterize modern day China-Japan relations as contending middle kingdoms. This is important if this essay's hypothesis is to be of any use beyond serving as an anecdotal historical survey.

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[47] The December 9th movement involved large demonstrations commemorating that day in 1935 when Japan established the puppet state of Manchukuo in Northern China (Iriye, China 84).

Chapter Three

Contending Middle Kingdoms Today

Arguing for perpetual antagonism in China-Japan relations, this chapter looks at two modern examples of China and Japan thinking and acting like two historical contending Middle Kingdoms. A brief consideration of the relationship between expansionism and cultural imperialism leads to the first modern example which looks at the apology stalemate, and then to the second example which argues that expressions of nationalism, when directed at the other, is the result of an inability to achieve complete centrality. As introduced in chapter one, Chinese and Japanese nationalism is a result of the friction between each state's own conceptual centrality, which is constant, and its factual centrality, which is not constant. Particular effort will be made to offer evidence of a historical consciousness of centrality that persists into the present day.

China historically did not try to expand its physical borders beyond a certain point (Holcombe 52), but instead was interested in creating and maintaining a cultural buffer around itself to prevent or limit foreign influence from entering. This supported the parallel goal of maintaining domestic stability. Conversely, Japanese

expansionism involved conquering new territory such as Hideyoshi's efforts in the late 1500s (Kuno 143) and events described below. Based on this evidence of history, analysts such as Holcombe, Huntington, and Teow,[48] see hegemonic interests in East Asia defined as cultural imperialism. Academia typically defines cultural imperialism as when, "certain cultural products (for example, socially-accepted beliefs, ideologies, entertainment commodities) have attained a position of dominance in a foreign culture through a process of coercive imposition, usually through their ties to political or economic power" (Dunch 302). Morgenthau's darker definition of cultural imperialism is, "the conquest and control of the minds of men as an instrument for changing the power relations between two nations" (57). In any case, the overall pattern of past capabilities and intents to be carried through the remainder of this analysis is one of a struggle for East Asian regional dominance between China and Japan. Some scholars even claim that a certain protonationalism grew in China from a very early date and that 'offers' to sinicize barbarian groups represented an expansive cultural imperialism (Holcombe 49-51). Japan took the first steps along these Sino centric lines but defected from China's preferred path to form a Nihon centric worldview, which then threatened China resulting in increased Chinese

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[48] In particular, reference is made to Holcombe's discussion of ancient China's *mission civilisatrice*, Huntington's view of modern China, and Teow's view of modern Japan.

nationalism. While other forms of imperialism sometimes accompany hegemony, the cultural variant in China and Japan was the most consistent over history and therefore support the present search for intent.

To show how remarkable the current level of antagonism is, it is useful to note a few instances when China and Japan showed a surprising level of amity towards each other based on their commonalities. Noting these instances does not detract from this essay's argument for a contentious nature and high potential for hostility between the two but instead serves to further validate the high level of commonness between them, perceived or otherwise, and therein add validity to Freud's theory of the narcissism of minor difference. There are several instances when China and Japan displayed signs of cordiality and togetherness based on their common cultural aspects, traditions, and worldviews. One example is the 1871 Sino-Japanese Treaty of Amity signed after Japan's long period of national isolation. Japan initiated the agreement in the hopes that it would put Japan on par with China rather than under the inferior identity given to Japan for centuries by the Chinese Sino centric worldview. China was struggling under a failing Ch'ing regime and so was motivated to sign the treaty out of fear of Japan drifting towards an alliance with the US and from the growing presence of Russia to the north. The treaty was in most aspects surprisingly equal in that it allowed for mutual extraterritoriality, incorporated a lot of common

Asian identity between China and Japan, and allowed for, "…friendly cooperation to cope with acts of inequality and contempt by a 3rd party" (Miwa 3).

A second example is Japan's victory in the Japan-Russo War in 1905 which was cause for celebration in both Japan and China (and other neighbors) because it was the first time a 'yellow' race defeated a 'white' race (Wells 24). Third, in 1972 when China and Japan normalized their relations, Prime Minister Tanaka gave a self-written poem to Chairman Mao to mark the occasion and in return Mao gave him a gift volume of the poems of Ch'u Yuan (Jansen 13). Fourth, Japan was first to open communications with China after the Tiananmen Incident in 1989. Of course, Japan was motivated to resume its vital trade with China, but the notable point is that their common heritage facilitated the use of informal channels acceptable to both (Zhao, Japanese 170-5). In August 1989, only two months after the Tiananmen incident, a private Japanese organization carried to Beijing "unofficial" messages from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). During such a critical time, both sides were willing to use the informal channels that were naturally there as an effective common second language that both understood. Later, in a March 1990 statement, then-Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen emphasized, "…the historical background, geographical location and cultural heritage…" between the two countries and called for better relations (Zhao, Japanese 178). In terms of access to high-level

leaders in China, one Western journalist concluded, "No other country can compete with Japan for access in China" (Zhao, Japanese 169). In diplomatic negotiations, Chinese generally find Japanese easier than Americans or Europeans to negotiate with, more able to produce high-level officials swiftly for negotiations, and culturally more sympathetic (Kreisberg 472). Finally, if the above examples are true signs of friendship, then a deeper basis for future reconciliation may be found in Confucianism's fifth relationship – friend-friend, as mentioned in chapter two. If China and Japan adhere to their similar worldviews then obeying this fifth relationship would not violate that 'rule'. However, Mencius later described the fifth relationship as one to be based on fidelity of the subordinate to the benevolent, but to date neither can agree of who has which role.

Pointing out commonalities as potential starting points to friendship, however, is unfortunately also to point out the relevance of Freud's theory of the narcissism of minor difference. For the more they have in common, the more they are threatened by the actions of the other. Since 1945 no serious armed conflicts have occurred but the contending nature of their relations is all too prevalent today, which is shown below in an examination of the apology stalemate and of rising nationalism in both countries.

The Apology Stalemate

For over 100 years, China was attacked, occupied, and victimized by many invaders. Japan victimized China from 1894 to 1945 more brutally than the others, but for a shorter time period in comparison. For example, the United Kingdom occupied part of China for over 150 years, Portugal occupied Macao for over 440 years, and China was forced to sign unfair treaties several times by many other Western nations. Among all of these former invaders and marauders however, only Japan is pushed constantly for a written apology for past misdeeds. In comparison to the other imperialists, why is Japan treated, "…with a loathing rarely found (elsewhere)" (Christensen 51)?[49] This essay argues that China does not have enough culturally in common with countries such as England, Portugal, or the US to cause the same level of hostility and sense of something at stake as with Japan.

With the end of the Cold War, China's push for Japan to recognize its war guilt increased (Bernstein and Munro 171). Chinese President Jiang Zemin, in November 1998, during a visit to Japan, scolded Japan for its continued distortion of history and repression of its war guilt (Barr 1). The apology issue is not an isolated dispute in that it spills over into other negotiations with each other on issues seemingly unrelated to the apology issue itself. "The 'debt' Japan owes to China has

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[49] To be clear, this discussion is in no way meant to minimize or sideline Japan's past atrocities and barbarism such as the 1937 Rape of Nanking, or the activities of Unit 731.

been a continuing theme in Sino-Japanese negotiations on virtually all subjects from trade and investment to Japan's security and defense policies" (Kreisberg 471-2). Japan has yet to offer China a statement that is written and includes the actual word "apology".[50] So far there have only been indirect remarks by Japanese leaders signaling a desire to put the apology issue to rest with words such as "remorse" or, "past aggression", but nothing that indicates, to China, an acceptance of responsibility by recent Japanese governments. However, despite a standing demand for a formal apology, China does not want such an apology – at least not yet. By holding on to the guilt 'card' China has been able, among other things, to remain as one of the top recipients of Japanese ODA for over two decades (Zhao, Japanese 163). In other words, to apologize would take away China's major 'bargaining chip', or 'history card' with Japan in current and future negotiations.

Above all, China desires to recreate a tributary system-like atmosphere in the region. Today, as long as there is no apology, China can act as if it is more moral and superior to Japan and so, in a sense, recreate similar superior-inferior dynamics between them. This desire to return to a (cultural) tribute system manifests itself in

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[50] "The question of what constitutes an apology is complicated by the matter of translation. The use of the word Japanese word *owabi* by Emperor Akihito in his expression of regret was condemned by veterans' organizations as being a less forceful term than *shazai*, which was not employed. Similarly, for remorse *hansei* was used rather than the alternative term *kaigo*" (Cunningham 7).

other modern forms as well. Japanese ODA to China, although possibly serving as an indirect apology, is also seen by China as a form of war reparations (Rozman 108) and a modern form of paying tribute epitomized by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Kong Quan's euphemistic characterization in 2004 of Japanese ODA as, "…an important *symbol* of Japan's friendly policy" (Pryzstup "Not"). If and when Japan fully apologizes, ODA would become less of a continual certainty and the relationship between them would be put on much more even terms – something China does not want. Based on the above points China has more to gain from an unsympathetic Japan than a sympathetic one, and therefore China hopes to keep Japan, "…in permanent strategic subordination" (Bernstein and Munro 171).

For Japan, analysts cite several reasons as to why no full written apology has been given yet. These include domestic reasons such as pressure from right-wing nationalist groups that help fund the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), pressure from Shinto religious groups, and legal reasons based on past peace treaties and settlements (Kattoulas 56-59). Whatever the given reason(s), the underlying factor is a cultural one. Japan is also in contention for the status of Middle Kingdom, but to apologize, and thereby admit wrongdoing, would preclude Japan from claims to a position that culturally is supposed to be occupied by someone who can do no wrong. What most literature on the subject overlooks is that, given all of the atrocities committed by

Japan towards China, the first demand is for nothing more than an apology! How can the words "We are sorry" atone for "one hundred years of humiliation"? This shows the importance and highly symbolic cultural value held by China and Japan of the giving and receiving of an apology. China does also press for more accurate representations of history in Japanese high school history books and disagrees over Japanese Prime Ministerial visits to the Yasukuni shrine, but Japan does not appear ready to bow to China's demands over any of these issues. To do so would concede power to China and shift the balance of cultural power and, by admitting wrongdoing, would prohibit Japanese cultural claims to superiority. Because an apology actually means something in Confucian East Asia, it would be admitting to one's moral inadequacy and the other's moral superiority, which would be equivalent to kowtowing before the Emperor under the old tribute system. To apologize would be to admit a lack or morals, lower Japan's cultural power and raise China's. This is why Japan does not want to apologize and likewise why China is threatened by the absence of an apology.

Lucian Pye sees "psycho-cultural insecurity at the root of all (domestic) factional affiliation and maneuver" (Dittmer 114). In the China-Japan situation however, the root of maneuver is a psycho-cultural feeling of *sup*eriority over the other. To many Chinese, Japan's inability to fully apologize subtly implies Japan's

belief in cultural superiority, "...by suggesting that it was not China but the United States that defeated Japan in 1945. It is a way for Japanese to tell us (China) we are inferior" (Marquand 2). Whether or not this is the true message from Japan, the danger here is that fiction can become reality when power is added to the narcissism of minor difference. To be superior requires someone to be inferior over so you either make efforts to raise your own status or lower the status of a similar external threatening group.[51] For this reason, China and Japan will always need each other, but the relationship will tend towards verbal antagonism, threats, and racist attitudes, rather than neighborly cooperation.

Nationalism

As defined in chapter one, Chinese and Japanese nationalism is a manifestation of the friction either perceives between each state's own factual centrality and conceptual centrality. In this essay, factual centrality is a modern version of the ability to act as a "Middle Kingdom". The gap between the two concepts of centrality in either state is first assumed by one state to be the fault of the other, who must then be blamed and shamed as a way to close the gap. As China continues to modernize and show impressive economic and political growth its factual

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[51] It is hard to avoid circular reasoning in this chicken and egg-type scenario. Instead of trying to prove 'who started it', this essay focuses on the situation today which is best described as a stalemate.

centrality arguably increases. Assuming that Chinese conceptual centrality remains constant we should expect the gap to shrink. However, Chinese nationalism is contradictorily rising. Several reasons can explain why Chinese nationalism increases as China becomes more successful. First, despite strong and consistent growth over the last decade, there are still decades of development and progress work needed to fully transform China into a modern state. In theoretical terms, China's rise in factual centrality is too slow for what the Chinese world view expects. Second, pent up frustration from "one hundred years of humiliation" by Japanese and Western powers can now confidently be expressed on the international level. For example, criticism from former invaders about internal sovereign Chinese-only matters such as charges of human rights abuses, or the Chinese posture towards Tibet or Taiwan, are treated as hypocritical and lead to Chinese nationalist reactions. Third, Japan has the world's second largest economy despite economic trouble for over ten years, and maintains an alliance with the US. Facts such as these add to a growing awareness that the gap can never be closed until a stubborn Japan is returned to a position of subordination. The above three factors are all sources of Chinese nationalism today, but it is the third point about Japan that is of interest next.

Chinese history has made China comfortable in the lead role as a Middle Kingdom. Analyst Peter Gries argues that, "…pride in the superiority of Confucian

civilization is central to nationalism in China today" (China's 8). In 1995, for example, Vice Chair of the National People's Congress, Tian Jiyun declared that, "The IQs of the Chinese *ethnicity*, the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, are very high" (Gries, China's 8). Today, in Freud's terms, Japan is too similar and this threatens China's former comfortable level of distinctiveness and also that Japan's success is evidence of China's failure to use the same ideas and tools that Japan learned from China. Therefore, the basis of Chinese nationalism today is to see Japan relatively weakened and returned to a position of proper respect and dependence on China which would make China 'right' after all and therein one step towards a perceived return to the middle of the Sino centric hierarchy.

Current analyses usually attribute the rise in Chinese nationalism to China's elites' need for legitimacy as Communist ideology declines. With the decline of socialist ideology since the end of the Cold War, the PRC is losing their current historical source of legitimacy. Attempting to replace this fading source of ideological legitimacy with cultural legitimacy, China has been more and more active recently in reminding the Chinese population about Japan's past victimization of China. Chinese leadership is able to blame and shame Japan as a way to maintain an attitude of cultural superiority. For example, in June 2001 China opened the Unit 731 Museum, which is only one of "...many highly produced permanent exhibitions

built in China during the 1990's, under an official campaign to highlight and educate about Japan's war of aggression" (Marquand 2). Directors and filmmakers are often sponsored by the state to make films that portray that bloody period of Chinese history when the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Red Army played a role in defeating the Japanese (Barr 4). As mentioned in chapter one, public demonstrations in China are illegal but if the protest has an anti-Japan theme, the PRC chooses to ignore the protest (York A11). This is all meant to provide the PRC with a certain sense of cultural legitimacy through a patriotic appeal and the evocation of nationalistic sentiment. By pointing out the differences, particularly with regards to morals, China can assume a superior, central position and attempt to shame Japan into a state of submission and compliance.

A need for government legitimacy only partly explains the forces at work, however. Not only does this standard explanation ignore the realist security dilemma at work, it also misses the threat that China sees in Japan due to their similarity – particularly in regards to their worldviews. To argue that Chinese nationalism is only the cause of the CCP stoking nationalist fires when needed to divert attention from weakening ideology is to say that Japan does not pose any threat to China. The missed point is that the CCP's stoking actually works and results in stirring up nationalist sentiment just like a fire needs hot smoldering coals to grow

from. Chinese resentment over the similarity of Japan only needs another example of Japan's defection from the Chinese world order as proof that China must be even more on guard for the omnipresent Japanese threat.

In addition to nationalist protests over an apology, textbooks, and Yasukuni shrine visits, there are also the following examples of events that triggered a reaction in China and therein highlight the sensitive nature of Chinese nationalism towards Japan. First, on May 5, 1994 the Asahi Weekly, a Japanese language journal, interviewed Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui, who speaks Japanese. In the article Lee spoke highly of Japan, poorly of the PRC, and above all, clearly identified himself as a Japanese (Shih 547). Second, China protested loudly when Japan invited Lee to watch the Asian Games in Hiroshima in October 1994. This was upsetting and threatening to China as it represented a modern day version of a tribute from a former Chinese tributary. Third, former Chinese table tennis champion, He Zhili 'defected' to Japan and assumed the name of Chire Koyama (Shih 560-2). Koyama/He then defeated her Chinese counterparts in the 1994 Asian Games to win the gold medal – for Japan.

Such incidents elicited a heightened reaction from China due to the anger of losing to a supposed culturally weaker neighbor. These reactions occur when China loses, or is threatened with losing, a chance to prove China's cultural superiority to

Japan. The Taiwan examples, in particular, are culturally threatening to China for if Taiwan ever fully declared independence from China, the act would at least be partly seen as what author Chih-yu Shih sees as an exercise of Japanization and potential incorporation of Taiwan into the Japanese sphere of influence (551-3). Japanese occupation of Taiwan from 1895 to 1945, although oppressive, made improvements in many areas including education and infrastructure that in part helped Taiwan achieve its modern status today. This piece of history, plus the friendly visits from the Taiwanese President mentioned above, and the cloudy relation of Taiwan to Japan via the US Security Treaty all arguably reinforce Taiwan's confidence to continue its threats of independence. Taiwanese independence would be more than a loss of a tributary to the Middle Kingdom – it would represent a loss of a piece of the kingdom itself. This elevates the stakes in Sino-Japan relations to exceptional heights.

Sources within China also see increases in Chinese assertiveness. In 2003 the Beijing University Institute of International Relations published a study arguing that the tributary mentality has reemerged within China and in some of the former tributary states in East Asia (Cheow 2). The study found similarities between China's new security environment and the former tributary system in the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties. China considers itself the central heart (*zhongxin)* in the region, desires a stable external environment, and believes that Chinese "generosity" in the

form of trade would buy complicity from China's neighbors. China's ability to achieve these three goals, of what this essay labels as 'factual' centrality, depends on whether China's former tributary states will accept China's rise to a preeminent role in the region. The study argues that most states, particularly the ASEAN states, South Korea, and Vietnam (all of whom China has improved relations with lately) will assume a subservient position of alignment around China. However, Sino-Japan rivalry will continue until China either unilaterally "reverses history", (Cheow 6) or Japan takes strides to remove barriers to Sino-Japanese rapprochement such as ending the Yasukuni Shrine visits or correcting its history books. Protesting the Japanese shrine visits in particular, China has not allowed Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi to visit Beijing in several years, including a chance to mark the 30th anniversary of Sino-Japan relations, thereby "…denying him the honor of "paying tribute" till he effectively *kowtows* to China over Yasukuni" (Cheow 6). China had not prevented previous Japanese Prime Ministers, who also visited the shrine, from visiting Beijing, so this recent increase in assertive rhetoric towards Japan is a sign that China is more and more ready to press its demands on others. A final sign of an increase in Chinese confidence and desire to continue its trajectory towards factual centrality was in 2000 when China raised military spending by 17.7% (Economist). This was much

higher than the average increase over the past decade of around 10% as noted in chapter one.

Chinese nationalism is not only based on its growing level of factual centrality, it is also often based on raising its status by identifying an outsider to blame for certain wrongs or Chinese shortcomings (Pye 70). The act of blaming, by pointing out the moral deficiency of an outsider, serves the dual purpose of raising China's status while lowering that of the outsider. For example, People's Liberation Army (PLA) writer Jin Hui wrote in his 1995 piece *Wailing at the Heavens* that Japanese men are "more bestial than beasts" (Gries, China's 93). Such depictions of status today reinforce historical Middle Kingdom superior-inferior dynamics. Analyst Chih-yu Shih even goes so far as to argue that without any external threats, China would cease to exist (544-546). While this essay does not extend the victim argument that far,[52] it does argue that if Sino centrism is hierarchical, and therein relational, China requires a less-moral barbarian or enemy state to relate to. This naturally allows for two types of enemies: barbarian threats based on pure force and power calculations (realist threats), and threats based on enemies that potentially have the capability to duplicate and reorder the hierarchy in the region (cultural threats) backed up with the requisite power capabilities.

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[52] The statement would be very hard to prove.

The rise in Chinese nationalism today is partly a result of China's frustration that their economic and political achievements over the last 50 years, combined with representing the longest running civilization in the world, has not translated into a rapid closure of the conceptual-factual gap in their centrality. Thus, the main stake for China is to achieve factual centrality while denying the same to Japan. China is not satisfied to become a modernized state with powerful armed forces and a successful economy unless these achievements generate the respect and status that supposedly goes with those achievements.

In the present case, Japan, as the most similar and therefore most able to divert traditional sources of centrality away from the original Middle Kingdom, often gets blamed and identified as the victimizer. China sees Japan as a threat to China's rise because Japan at the moment is the only power in the region that could challenge that rise. "Rise" refers to growth in all three pillars of power – military, economic, and culture. The US is another power in the region that could impact the course of China's rise, but Chinese nationalist responses directed at the US are only standard expressions expected under classical Realist theory when the first two pillars are at odds with each other. China and the US are culturally too dissimilar to ignite the narcissism of minor difference such as between China and Japan. The US will always be a barbarian in East Asia incapable of becoming sinicised. Japan, then, is a

unique threat to China because it is seen to have the military capacity, with or without US military backing, and the economic capacity to challenge China's rise, *plus* the added cultural background that could divert cultural power away from the Middle Kingdom. China does not want power alone, but the respectful attention that status is supposed to engender.

Chinese and Japanese nationalisms are connected so it is important to understand both at the same time. For example, in 1989 Shintaro Ishihara wrote the anti-American book "No" *to ieru nihon* [The Japan That Can Say No]. This was a very one-sided nationalistic piece, which quickly became a best seller in Japan. Not to be outdone, in 1996 Chinese author Song Qiang led the authoring of a similarly titled anti-American book, *Zhongguo keyi shuobu* [China Can Say No] that was very popular in China. Although both books were mainly anti-American, many analysts have observed that the Chinese "no" is also a response to Japan's "no" (Gries, China's 35-6). Later that year Song, along with other authors, released the equally popular *Zhongguo haishi neng shuobu* [China Can Still Say No].[53] This latter work had more of an anti-Japan focus than the first (Deans 121), and emphasized the differences between superior Chinese culture and "inferior" Japanese culture (Gries, China's 38-39). For example, in a section titled "Japan Should Beat Itself", the

[53] A third book in 1996 was "Why does China say No?" (Qian)

authors state that "Japan is an immoral neighbor....Immoral in the past, immoral in the present. Immoral in politics, immoral in economics..." (Gries, China's 93). Japan's decision to stop paying tribute to the Middle Kingdom in 894, as an early Japanese "no" is offered here as the turning point in Sino-Japan relations that 'revealed' Japan's immorality and an end to "...Japan's reverence for China as a cultural mentor" (Dikotter 118). Japan no longer wanted to play the inferior role to China. However, since then China's continued refusal to accept Japan as anything more than an inferior barbarian immoral state generates growing resentment that surfaces as Japanese nationalism today.

Since the Pacific War in particular, China has been able to assume the moral high ground over Japan. Morality is supposed to begin in the Chinese Middle Kingdom. However, with the Pacific War slipping into the past and with China's persistence to use the past to serve their interests today, Japanese tolerance for unrelenting Chinese nationalism is diminishing and generating a growing attitude that Japan is at least morally equal to China, "...if not an ethically superior nation" (Green and Self 47). China's suppression of human rights, continued nuclear testing and missile launches toward Taiwan in particular, make it hard for today's younger generation of Japanese to accept morally based threats and statements of shame from an equally younger generation of Chinese leaders over current issues such as Japanese

history textbooks and Yasukuni shrine visits. These feelings of indifference mix with disappointment over China's continued use of history as a weapon despite the perceived presentation of Japanese olive branches. For example, in 1979 Japan became the first non-communist country to extend aid to China. Japan, as the economically stronger of the two at the time, shared its experience and taught China the principles of economic liberalism in the hopes of guiding China away from the USSR and into a more cooperative and friendly Japanese trading partner (Green and Self 36). Other examples include Japan's low-key response after the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 after which Japan was the first to resume trade with China, the highly symbolic visit from the Japanese Emperor in 1992, and decades of extensive Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).[54] If these friendly gestures by Japan are intended to convince China to forget the past, it is not working. As such, Japanese attempts to play a central, leading role have not led to a more deferential China,[55] and Japanese thinking has shifted, "...from commercial liberalism to reluctant realism" (Green and Self 36). Frustration from an uncompromising China was echoed in the words of Japan's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Machimura Nobutaka, during an event at

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[54] China began receiving ODA from Japan in 1979, and for most of the 10 years leading up to the Tiananmen incident in 1989 Japan was China's top donor accounting for over 70 percent of all foreign aid to China (Zhao, Japanese 163).
[55] The article cites China's nuclear tests, threats against Taiwan, and nationalistic territorial claims, among others, as evidence of China's non-cooperativeness (36).

the University of California, Berkeley in 1999 when he concluded that the Chinese seek "moral superiority" (Gries, China's 97). Neither Japan nor China will concede a deferential role, for that would equate to a loss of cultural centrality and therein influence in the region. China will not defer to Japan, just as much as Japan will not defer to China.

If China's intent is to emphasize the differences, by assuming a position of moral superiority in order to feel less threatened, then the ironic conclusion is that Japanese nationalism and hostility towards China also will increase. To put the above in terms of the narcissism of minor difference, both China and Japan are unable to reconcile their disagreements because of a shared hierarchical worldview. This similarity is threatening to both in that the hierarchy cannot have both in the middle, so admitting any past wrongdoings would prevent one from occupying the central position which is supposed to represent the height of morality and justness in the world. A sign of weakness by one side would be taken as an equal increase in the strength in the other, which causes the stalemate seen today.

Two final examples highlight the nature and extent of Japanese nationalism. Shintaro Ishihara, the author of the nationalistic The Japan That can say No became Governor of Tokyo Prefecture on April 23, 1999. In his book he argues for Japan's "superior cultural ethos" and argues, "China dates from antiquity, but lacks cultural

continuity and consistency..." (Ishihara 107) as a way to suggest that, while China may have been the rightful Middle Kingdom in the past, that claim is no longer valid today. His controversial views and nationalistic beliefs are also clearly described on his personal website.[56] For example, Ishihara offers such outlandish claims as the existence of Chinese criminal ethnic DNA as the reason why so many Chinese who come to Japan commit crimes. Despite these views and aggressive statements against China, he successfully ran for reelection in 2003,[57] and in 2004 was ranked as the 6th most popular governor among the 47 in Japan (Bungei). It is notable that the ruling LDP officially endorsed Ishihara in the 2003 election even though Ishihara ran as an independent (Matthews). In the July 3, 2005 Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election, the LDP maintained its strong support for Ishihara (Arita). Although some in Japan probably do not agree with his beliefs, the fact that such things appear on the personal, yet public, website of a prominent politician, that he achieved reelection in 2003 and remains popular, are symptomatic of the existence of anti-China sentiments in Japan, even if they are relatively muted so far when compared to China's nationalist rhetoric. As mentioned in chapter one, a recent poll in Japan found the

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[56] http://sensenfukoku.net

[57] Ishihara won 70% of the vote in the 2003 election which was the highest margin ever for a Tokyo Governor (Matthews).

number of Japanese who have "friendly feelings" toward China has fallen to 37.6%, the lowest since 1978 when the poll began.

If Japanese nationalism is muted, it is best found in the, "…vast array of literature which thinking elites have produced to define the uniqueness of Japanese culture, society, and national character" (Yoshino 2) known as *nihonjinron* or 'discussions of the Japanese'. Above all, *nihonjinron* emphasize Japanese uniqueness and explains all facets of Japanese life on cultural terms, which Peter N. Dale sees as a narcissistic rejection of the 'other' – China in particular (141). Thus, in Freud's terms China is too similar to Japan, which threatens Japan's uniqueness and sense of homogeneity. Another author who describes *nihonjinron* as a kind of quiet nationalism is Harumi Befu who sees, "*nihonjinron* as a prescriptive model" (116-17). Statements about the way Japanese *are* superior are also statements that Japanese *should be* superior. Befu summarizes that *nihonjinron* is a "cultural theology of Japan" (127). Therefore, while Chinese nationalism is more concerned with proving the superiority of Chinese culture, Japanese nationalism is more concerned with proving the uniqueness of Japanese culture.

China needs cultural dependence from Japan as a symbol of Sino centrality based on moral superiority, and Japan desires cultural independence from China as a symbol of centrality based in uniqueness. The former is expressed in shame and

guilt-based threats towards Japan and the latter is expressed in displays of uniqueness or sometimes with violent outbursts such as in the 1930s and 1940s. In terms presented in this chapter, the main stake for Japan is to achieve factual centrality while denying the same from China. While the non-coercive means or coercive means vary over time and between China and Japan, the desired ends are the same – to 'rightly' occupy the central, leading role in East Asia.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Chapter one began by wondering why China and Japan continue to maintain an antagonistic relationship despite recently becoming each other's top trading partner. The logical assumption was that there is something at stake which prevents greater stability in their political relations with each other. However, in trying to uncover the stake, or stakes, modern political theories such as Liberalism, Constructivism, and classical Realism were found to be inadequate to fully describe the nature of China-Japan political relations. Since these theories are based in Western experience, an argument was made to use the most accurate of the theories available, Realism, and expand it to include the East Asian political experience. In particular, this essay employs culture, not only as a form of power on its own, but also as a driving factor of state competition for power and influence. Once this theoretical expansion occurred, this essay's attention focused on discovering why East Asian culture leads to antagonism between China and Japan when they consider each other. Freud's concept of the narcissism of minor difference, wherein the more two groups have in common the more likely they will be hostile towards each other, fit well with the

analyses of why China and Japan have a lot in common, yet paradoxically maintain an antagonistic political posture towards the other. The main troubling cultural aspect China and Japan have in common is their shared Confucian worldview that relationships with other Confucian-based states can only be hierarchical and that cultural superiority, as an important marker of power, influences the dynamics of each superior-inferior relationship. The main stake therefore is that both China and Japan desire to occupy the superior position in their bilateral relationship.

Based on the brief synopsis above, the following logical progression of summary points, conclusions, and stakes become apparent.

A. China and Japan have enough in common to see potential for hostilities.

To argue that culture is a form of power between China and Japan based on Freud's narcissism of minor difference requires the simultaneous argument that China and Japan have enough in common and that culture as a form of power is part of their mutual understanding. The ability for culture to be counted as power depends on the ability of the other side to be able to interpret culture-based threats. For that to be possible, both sides need to have enough in common – something that is argued for in this essay. Japan has enough historical experience of learning and borrowing from China to be able to 'translate' culture-based threats from China.

In particular, their main commonality is their matching applications of Confucianism into their model for foreign relations and to which surrounding states are supposed to align based on a superior-inferior relationship. However, since Confucianism is essentially a domestic-level belief system about superior-inferior relationships that regulate society, what will happen when two Confucianist states collide? In the case of China and Japan, both enter the conflict assuming that the other is the inferior one. Chinese and Japanese nationalism, as argued in chapter three, is a reflection of the frustration of being unable to gain the factual superior central role over the other despite the constant belief in conceptual centrality. Nationalism is therefore an early symptom of growing resentment towards the other especially as each other's power grows. The longer Japan maintains a defiant posture of cultural independence to China and the longer that China finds such a posture threatening, the more likely China-Japan political relations will continue to deteriorate rather than improve and stabilize. Such a struggle between the two leads to the two competing for spheres of influence in southeast and east Asia such as the current competition for influence in ASEAN (Watanabe) or in Burma and in Russia (Green and Self 51). Also, as mentioned in chapter two, an effective regional security institution is non-existent. China and Japan, as the two leading states in the region, would have to be members of such an institution if it is to be effective in

mitigating regional tensions.[58] However, China and Japan do not appear ready to enter such an institution as equals to each other.[59] This stalemate hinders the resolution of other serious political problems in the region.

B. Culture is power.

As stated in chapter one, Morgenthau opened the theoretical door to considerations of culture when he said that power, "...may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man. Thus power covers all social relationships which serve that end..." (9). This essay therefore argues that since the cultural traits of an actor add to the security or insecurity of the actors, and therefore go into their calculations and predictions, then political analysis of China-Japan relations needs to consider such traits to complete the Realist picture. Diagram B, "East Asian Classical Realism", describes the three pillars of power - culture, economic, and military. Each form of power contributes to a state's ability to influence other states into preferred patterns of behavior and into preferred lines of hierarchy. Classical Realism only needed to consider an example of two conflicting states with similar cultures in order to explore its full potential.

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[58] This was one lesson learned by the former League of Nations.
[59] Both China and Japan belong to the United Nations. However, they are not equal members in that China belongs to the permanent Security Council and has veto power. China's clout in this sense will make it hard for Japan to realize its goal of attaining a permanent seat in the Security Council.

In traditional China, culture had long been an important part of power. Effective rule required both hard and soft forms of power. For example, Mongol and Manchu invaders may have won on power, but eventually had to adapt Chinese culture into their administrations in order to become a recognized ruling authority[60] (Fairbank, Chinese 273). There is thus a link between the ability to rule and legitimacy to rule. Therefore, if the domestic legitimacy of China's ruling elite, and by extension its international legitimacy, is derived from its cultural power then threats to its sources of legitimacy can trigger the cultural Realist security dilemma and drive Chinese political action. For example, if there was an increase in Japan's ability to influence others, by power or by persuasion, then China interpreted this as a challenge to China's cultural superiority. Since the traditional presentation of tribute to the Emperor of China represented China's influence over the sending state, Japan's non-participation in the tribute system was a threat to the Chinese leader's legitimacy to rule.

Applying the above analyses of influence to China-Japan relations today, China manages to turn Japanese continued indifference into an asset via the common

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[60] Fairbank notes that effective Chinese government combined a traditional power structure (military capacity, force held in reserve, and the administrative capacity of the emperor and his various officials) with Chinese culture (ideology of imperial Confucianism, underlying philosophy of social order, and the ritual observances and ceremonial forms), which together legitimized and sanctioned the ruling authority (Fairbank, Chinese 273).

'China as victim' narrative. This begs the question as to which would be a greater source of legitimacy for the former Middle Kingdom – a subdued and subordinate Japan or a stubborn independent one? Looking back at history the latter seems much more apparent in that China rarely tried to subdue Japan. Only twice did China try to invade Japan despite rhetoric to the contrary. Since the threat of a Japanese invasion of the mainland, other than pirate activity, was minimal then Japan could be left alone until a later unspecified time when they could be dealt with appropriately. Today however, as China's power grows and Japan's stalls, China becomes more and more capable of pressuring Japan into a subordinate inferior role.

Although China and Japan pursued the same ends over history, which was to achieve or maintain centrality, the means employed towards those ends were quite different from one another. Japan expressed its desire to achieve centrality through the direct application of power rather than the Chinese preference for non-coercive means[61] such as through the attraction of its culture or through moral-based threats. For example, Japan/Satsuma had to invade in order to achieve influence over the Liu-Ch'iu/Ryukyu Kingdom, Korea, Vietnam, and various regions in East and Southeast Asia during attempts to build a co-prosperity sphere. These were all steps

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[61] Although Johnston convincingly argued that China exhibits a strategic culture that prefers coercive means to non-coercive means, this is not the case when China considered Japan over history. China, when led by sinicised leaders, never attacked Japan – even after centuries of threats and shamings.

that diverted influence away from China and towards Japan. When it came time to directly invade China in the 1930s, Japanese aggression was particularly brutal. What sadly happened in the 1930s and 1940s was thus more accurately the result of, rather than the beginning of, a historical legacy of animosity between these northeast Asian neighbors.

It is thus important to understand the link between culture and power in China-Japan relations. For Japan this link is summarized as 'power as centrality' and for China as 'centrality as power'. In either case, gaining an accurate and more complete understanding of both the Realist and cultural mechanics driving China and Japan will help us comprehend past antagonisms and, more importantly, the persistence of simmering conflicts between the two today. China and Japan operate with a competing worldview of cultural superiority and therefore treat each other with the same care and concern expected and predicted in classical Realism, but with cultural elements shared by China and Japan that should be recognized in order to render a Realist description of bilateral political relations complete.

C. China and Japan share a zero-sum culture.

The shared aspects of Chinese and Japanese culture, as they perceive it, is one form of power as if it is a material object that can be gained only at the other's

loss. Culture therefore cannot be shared without the accompanying tribute and the borrower's assumption of an inferior role. Otherwise, for the borrower to act in any divergent way from the lender is, in Freud's words, "…a criticism of (the lender)…" (Ignatieff 50). This psychological phenomenon between similar groups triggers a cultural security dilemma between China and Japan. Arguing along similar lines, Iain Johnston concluded that China views the stakes in conflicts with adversaries in zero-sum terms (Zheng 6). Chapter two extended this argument further by showing how Japan learned such hierarchical worldviews from China, which inherently put their relationship on an intercept course.

China's source of security or 'edge' during early interactions with Japan and other states was its advanced civilization full of new thought, objects, laws, writing system, and fine arts. Other developing groups or states that did not have such cultural objects, or had inferior forms of these objects, had to show humility and respect to China in order to gain access to such objects. In other words China's security was based on its difference. Therefore, any other group that was similar in form and appearance to China, but did not show humility, represented a loss of China's edge, and therein China's power to dominate, and was therefore a threat to China. China's strongest asset or 'weapon' at the time was the attraction of a superior culture and civilization that was remarkably effective at maintaining stability

at its borders, but for Japan to become sinicised and essentially 'take' Chinese culture and then step out of China's sphere of control, known as the tribute system, essentially 'unarmed' China against Japan. This cultural attitude is a product of history that persists today.

The existence of a state's national character, which is one of Morgenthau's basic elements of national power, in this case China's, serves as a constant reminder to Japan of similarities that exist between them. In Japan therefore, aspects of cultural uniqueness are emphasized in nationalist phenomena such as the *nihonjonron* in order to distance Japan from the original source of most Japanese culture – China. This emphasis and search for uniqueness serves to raise the power of Japanese national character, which at the same time reduces that same element of Chinese national power to hold a cultural debt over Japan. Japanese nationalist expressions are therefore threatening to China for cultural reasons. As mentioned above, the defiant posture each maintains towards the other contributes to a decline in their political relations, as well as has implications for other states and other political issues in the region.

When China's or Japan's power grows, so does their ability to exaggerate their differences, or uniqueness, from the other, and try to assume a dominating

position.[62] Michael Ignatieff posits that, "Power is the vector that turns minor into major difference" (50). Freud's notion of the narcissism of minor difference and commonality refer not to militaries or economies, but to cultural characteristics. As such, East Asian culture is the focus of analyses here rather than economic power, or military power, because only culture can ignite the narcissism of minor difference. The power of culture based on difference or uniqueness is easily threatened and triggers the security dilemma and demands for its resolution.

Contending Middle Kingdoms Today – The Stakes

Analyzing China-Japan interactions reveals attempts by both to substitute facets of the old tribute system and the worldview it embodied into their modern day relationship. The goal of China and Japan is not to eliminate the other, but rather to put the other in a role of submission so as to reinforce the self-assumption of superiority. The result is a kind of prestige contest marked by fear of losing to the other the chance to set certain precedents. Chapter three ended with the observation that today China needs cultural dependence from Japan to confirm China's superiority, and Japan needs cultural independence from China to affirm Japan's uniqueness. Both states are compelled by their Confucian worldview to establish a

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[62] Geographical proximity adds a sense of immediacy to this dilemma in China-Japan relations.

superior-inferior relationship, but neither state will concede the role of superior to the other. To do so would concede access to whatever privileges either assumes goes along with recognition of cultural superiority, and thus the one common, overriding stake is the potential for one to gain privilege over the other. Both are vying not just for influence over the other, but also for regional hegemony that would naturally result, and the intangibles that status is supposed to engender such as respect and 'rightful' stature in the world. This would satisfy and fulfill either's narcissistic and self-assumed status as the superior middle kingdom.

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